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THE

WORKS

OF

ARTHUR MURPHY, Esq.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
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THIRD VOLUME.

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To Mrs. ABINGTON.

MADAM,

YOU will be ſurpriſed, at this diſtance of time, and in this public manner, to receive an anſwer to a very polite Letter, which you addreſſed to me in the courſe of the laſt Summer at Yarmouth. In a ſtrain of vivacity, which always belongs to you, you invite me to write again for the Stage. You tell me, that having gone through the Comedies of THE WAY TO KEEP HIM, ALL IN THE WRONG, and THREE WEEKS AFTER MARRIAGE, you now want more from the ſame hand. I am not bound, you ſay, by my reſolution, ſignified in a Prologue about ten years ago, to take my leave of the Dramatic Muſe. At the perjuries of Poets, as well as Lovers, Jove laughs; and the Publie, you think, will be ready to give me a general releaſe from the promiſe. All this is very flattering. If the following Scenes, at the end of

Five

Five and Twenty years, ſtill continue to be a part of the public amuſement, I know to what cauſe I am to aſcribe it. Thoſe Graces of Action, with which you adorn whatever you undertake, have given to the Piece a degree of brilliancy, and even novelty, as often as you have repeated it. I am not unmindful of the Performers who firſt obtained for the Author the favour of the Town: a GARRICK, a YATES, a CIBBER, united their abilities; and who can forget MRS. CLIVE? They have all paſſed away, and the COMEDY might have paſſed with them, if you had not ſo frequently placed it in a conſpicuous light.

The truth is, without ſuch talents as yours, all that the Poet writes is a dead letter. He deſigns for repreſentation, but it is the Performer that gives to the draught, however juſtly traced, a form, a ſpirit, a countenance, and a mind. All this you have done for the WIDOW BELLMOUR; and that excellence in your art, which you are known to poſſeſs, can, no doubt,

doubt, lend the ſame animation to any new Character. But alas! I have none to offer. That *Tinder in the Poet's mind*, which, as Doctor YOUNG ſays, *takes fire from every ſpark*, I have not found, even though you have endeavoured to kindle the flame. Could I write, as you can act, I ſhould be proud to obey your commands: but after a long diſuſe, how ſhall I recover the train of thinking neceſſary for plot, humour, incident, and character?

In the place of novelty, permit me to requeſt that the *Way to Keep Him* may be inſcribed to you. You are entitled to it, Madam; for your talents have made the Play your own. A Dedication, I grant, at this period of time, comes rather late; but being called upon for a new edition, I have retouched the Dialogue, and perhaps ſo reformed the whole, that, in it's preſent ſtate, it may be deemed leſs unworthy of your acceptance. It is, therefore, my wiſh, that this Addreſs may in future attend the Comedy, to remain (as long as ſuch a

thing can remain) a tribute due to the GENIUS OF Mrs. ABINGTON, and a mark of that eſteem, with which I ſubſcribe myſelf,

Madam,

Your real Admirer,

And moſt obedient Servant,

LINCOLN'S-INN,
25th Nov. 1785.

ARTHUR MURPHY.

THE

WAY TO KEEP HIM:

A

COMEDY,

Performed at the

THEATRE ROYAL

IN

DRURY-LANE.

——Ut ameris, amabilis eſto:
Quod tibi non facies, ſolvave forma dabit.

OVID.

Nam facit ipſa ſuis interdum fœmina factis,
Morigeriſque modis, et mundo corpore cultu,
Ut facile inſueſcat ſecum vir degere vitam.

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. HOLLAND.

WHEN firſt the haughty critic's dreadfull rage,
With Gothic *fury, over-ran the ſtage,*
Then PROLOGUES *roſe, and ſtrove with varied art*
To gain the ſoft acceſſes to the heart.
Thro' all the tuneful tribe th' infection flew,
And each GREAT GENIUS—*his petition drew;*
In formâ pauperis *addreſs'd the pit,*
With all the gay antitheſis of wit.
Their ſacred art poor poets own'd a crime;
They ſigh'd in ſimile; *they bow'd in* rhyme.
For charity they all were forc'd to beg;
And ev'ry Prologue was " a wooden leg."
Next theſe a hardy, manly race appear'd,
Who knew no dullneſs, and no critics fear'd.
From Nature's ſtore each curious tint they drew,
Then boldly held the piece to public view:
" *Lo! here, exact proportion! juſt deſign!*
" *The bold relief! and the unerring line!*
" *Mark in ſoft union how the colours ſtrike!*
" *This, Sirs, you will, or this you ought to like.*"
They bid defiance to the foes of wit,
" *Scatter'd like ratſbane up and down the pit.*"
Such prologues were of yore;—our bard to-night
Diſdains *a falſe compaſſion to excite:*
Nor too ſecure your judgment would oppoſe;
He packs no jury, AND HE DREADS NO FOES.
To govern here no party *can expect;*
An audience will preſerve its own reſpect.
To catch the foibles, that miſguide the fair,
From trifles ſpring, and end in laſting care,
Our author aims; nor this alone he tries,
But as freſh objects, and new manners riſe,
He bids his canvaſs glow with various dyes;

Where ſenſe and folly mix in dubious ſtrife,
Alternate riſe, and ſtruggle into life.
Judge if with art the mimic ſtrokes be blend;
If amicably light and ſhade contend;
The mental features if he trace with ſkill;
See the piece firſt, then DAMN *it if you will.*

Dramatis Perſonæ.

MEN.

LOVEMORE,	Mr. GARRICK.
SIR BASHFULL CONSTANT,	Mr. YATES.
SIR BRILLIANT FASHION,	Mr. PALMER.
WILLIAM, Serv. to LOVEMORE,	Mr. KING.
SIDEBOARD, Serv. to SIR BASH.	Mr. ACKMAN
POMPEY, a Black Boy, &c.	

WOMEN.

The WIDOW BELLMOUR,	Mrs. CIBBER.
Mrs. LOVEMORE,	Mrs. YATES.
LADY CONSTANT,	Mrs. DAVIES.
MUSLIN, Maid to Mrs. LOVEMORE,	Mrs. CLIVE.
MIGNIONET, Maid to the WIDOW.	Miſs BRADSHAW.
FURNISH, Maid to LADY CONSTANT,	Miſs HIPPISLEY.

THE WAY TO KEEP HIM.

ACT the FIRST.

Scene, an APARTMENT *in* LOVEMORE'S HOUSE:

WILLIAM *and* SIDEBOARD, *discovered at a Game of Cards.*

WILLIAM.

A PLAGUE go with it! I have turned out my game: Is forty ſeven good?

SIDEBOARD.

Equal.

WILLIAM.

Confound the cards! tierce to a queen?

SIDEBOARD.

Equal.

WILLIAM.

There again! ruined, ſtock and block: nothing can ſave me. I don't believe there is a footman in England plays with worſe luck than myſelf. Four aces are fourteen.

SIDEBOARD.

That's hard, cruel by Jupiter! Aces againſt me every time.

WILLIAM.

Four aces are fourteen: fifteen. *(Plays)*

SIDEBOARD.

There's your equality.

WILLIAM.

Very well: I turned out my point. Sixteen, *(Plays)* ſeventeen. *(Plays.)*

Enter MUSLIN.

MUSLIN.

There's a couple of you, indeed! You are ſo fond of the vices of your betters, that you are ſcarce out of your beds, but you muſt imitate them and their profligate ways. Set you up forſooth!

WILLIAM.

Prithee, be quiet, woman, do. Eighteen. *(Plays)*

MUSLIN.

Upon my word!—With your uſual eaſe Mr. Coxcomb.

WILLIAM.

Manners, Mrs. Muſlin: you ſee Mr. Sideboard here; he is juſt come on a meſſage from Sir Baſhfull Conſtant.

Conſtant. Have ſome reſpect for a ſtranger. Nineteen, clubs.——(*Plays.*)

MUSLIN.

It would become Mr. Sideboard to go back with his anſwer, and it would become you to ſend my Lady word——

WILLIAM.

Command your tongue, Mrs. Muſlin: you'll put me out. What ſhall I play?—He will go back with his anſwer in good time. Let his maſter wait till it ſuits our conveniency. Nineteen, clubs: where ſhall I go now?

MUSLIN.

Have done with your folly, Mr. Impertinent. My Lady deſires to know——

WILLIAM.

I tell you, woman, my maſter and I deſire to have nothing to do with you and your Lady. Twenty, diamonds. (*Plays*)

MUSLIN.

But I tell you, Mr. Brazen, that my Lady deſires to know at what hour your maſter came home laſt night, and how he does this morning?

WILLIAM.

Ridiculous! Don't diſturb us with that nonſenſe now: you ſee I am not at leiſure. I and my maſter are reſolved to be teazed no more by you; and ſo Mrs. Go-between, you may return as you came,

What the devil ſhall I play? We will have nothing to do with you, I tell you.

MUSLIN.

You'll have nothing to do with us! But you ſhall have to do with us, or I'll know the reaſon why. (*She ſnatches the cards from him, and throws them about.*)

WILLIAM.

Death and fury! this meddling woman has deſtroyed my whole game. A man might as well be married, as be treated in this faſhion.

SIDEBOARD.

I ſhall ſcore you for this, Mr. William: I was ſure of the cards, and that would have made me up.

WILLIAM.

No you'll ſcore nothing for this. You win too much of me. I am a very pretty annuity to you.

SIDEBOARD.

Annuity ſay you? I loſe a fortune to you in the courſe of the year. How could you, Mrs. Muſlin, behave in this ſort to perſons of our dignity?

MUSLIN.

Decamp with your dignity; take your anſwer to your maſter; turn upon your rogues heel, and rid the houſe.

SIDEBOARD.

I ſhan't diſpute with you. I hate wrangling: I leave that to lawyers and married people; they have nothing elſe to do. Mr. William, I ſhall let Sir Baſhfull

Baſhfull know that Mr. Lovemore will be at home for him. When you come to our houſe, I'll give you your revenge. We can have a ſnug party there, and I promiſe you a glaſs of choice Champaigne: it happens to be a good batch; Sir Baſhfull gets none of it: I keep it for my own friends. *Au revoir.*

[*Exit.*

WILLIAM. (*to* MUSLIN.)

You ſee what miſchief you have made.

MUSLIN.

Truce with your foolery, and now, Sir, be ſo obliging as to ſend my Lady an anſwer to her queſtions? How and when your rakehelly maſter came home laſt night?

WILLIAM.

I'll tell you one thing, Mrs. Muſlin; you and my maſter will be the death of me at laſt. In the name of charity, what do you both take me for? Whatever appearances may be, I am but of mortal mould; nothing ſupernatural about me.

MUSLIN.

Upon my word, Mr. Powder-Puff!

WILLIAM.

I have not, indeed; and fleſh and blood, let me tell you, can't hold it always at this rate. I can't be for ever a ſlave to Mr. Lovemore's eternal frolicks, and to your ſecond hand airs.

MUSLIN.

Second-hand airs!

WIL-

WILLIAM.

Yes, ſecond-hand airs! you take them at your ladies toilets with their caſt gowns, and ſo you deſcend to us with them.—And then on the other hand, there's my maſter!—Becauſe he chuſes to live upon the principal of his health, and ſo run out his whole ſtock as faſt as he can, he muſt have my company with him in his devil's dance to the other world! Never at home till three, four, five, ſix in the morning.

MUSLIN.

Ay, a vile ungrateful man! always ranging abroad, and no regard for a wife that doats upon him. And your love for me is all of a piece. I have no patience with you both; a couple of falſe, perfidious, abandoned profligates!

WILLIAM.

Hey! where is your tongue running? My maſter, as the world goes, is a good ſort of a civil kind of a huſband; and I, heaven help me! a poor ſimpleton of a conſtant, amorous puppy, who bear with all the whims of my little tyrant here. Come and kiſs me, you jade, come and kiſs me.

MUSLIN.

Paws off Cæſar. Don't think to make me your dupe. I know when you go with him to this new lady, this Bath-acquaintance; and I know you are as falſe as my maſter, and give all my dues to your Mrs. Mignionet there.

WILLIAM.

Huſh! not a word of that. I am ruined, preſſed, and

and ſent on board a Tender directly, if you blab that I truſted you with that ſecret.——But to charge me with falſehood!—injuſtice and ingratitude.——My maſter, to be ſure, does drink an agreeable diſh of tea with the widow. He has been there every evening this month paſt. How long things are to be in this train, heaven only knows. But he does viſit there, and I attend him. I aſk my maſter, Sir, ſays I, what time will you pleaſe to want me? He fixes the hour, and I ſtrut by Mrs. Mignionet, without ſo much as tipping her a ſingle glance. She ſtands watering at the mouth, and a pretty fellow that, ſays ſhe: Ay, gaze on, ſay I, gaze on: I know what you would be at: You would be glad to have me: But four grapes, my dear; and ſo home I come, to cheriſh my own lovely little wanton: you know I do, and after toying with thee, I fly back to my maſter, later indeed than he appoints, but always too ſoon for him. He is loth to part: he lingers and dangles, and I ſtand cooling my heels. Oh! to the devil I pitch ſuch a life.

MUSLIN.

Why don't you ſtrive to reclaim the vile man?

WILLIAM.

Softly; not ſo faſt. I have my talent, to be ſure; yes, I muſt acknowledge ſome talent. But can you ſuppoſe that I have power to turn the drift of his inclinations? Can I give him a new taſte, and lead him as I pleaſe? And to whom? To his wife? Ridiculous! A wife has no attraction now; the ſpring of the paſſions flies back; it won't do.

MUSLIN.

Fine talking! and you admire yourſelf for it, don't you? Can you proceed, Sir?

WILLIAM.

I tell you a wife is out of date: the time was, but that's all over; a wife is a drug now; mere tar-water, with every virtue under heaven, but nobody takes it.

MUSLIN.

Have done, or I'll print theſe ten nails upon your rogue's face.

WILLIAM.

Come and kiſs me, I ſay.

MUSLIN.

A fiddleſtick for your kiſſes, while you encourage your maſter to open rebellion againſt the beſt of wives.

WILLIAM.

I tell you it's all her own fault. Why does not ſhe ſtudy to pleaſe him as you do me? Come, and throw you arms about my neck.

MUSLIN.

As I uſed to do, Mr. Impudence?

WILLIAM.

Then I muſt force you to you own good. *(kiſſes her)* Pregnant with delight! egad, if my maſter was not in the next room——*(bell rings.)*

Mus-

MUSLIN.

Huſh! my Lady's bell: how long as he been up?

WILLIAM.

He has been up—(*kiſſes her*) 'Sdeath! you have ſet me all on fire. (*kiſſes her.*)

MUSLIN.

There, there; have done now; the bell rings again. What muſt I ſay? When did he come home?

WILLIAM.

He came home——(*kiſſes her*) he came home at five this morning; damned himſelf for a blockhead (*kiſſes*) Went to bed in a ſurly humour; was tired of himſelf and every body elſe. (*bell rings, he kiſſes her.*) And he is now in tip-top ſpirits with Sir Brilliant Faſhion in that room yonder.

MUSLIN.

Sir Brilliant Faſhion? I wiſh my Lady would mind what he ſays to her—you great bear! you have given me ſuch a fluſh in my face! (*takes a pocket looking glaſs*) I look pretty well, I think. There (*kiſſes him*) have done, and let me begone.

[*Exit.*

WILLIAM.

There goes high and low life contraſted in one perſon. She has not dived to the bottom of my maſter's ſecrets; that's one good thing. What ſhe knows, ſhe'll blab. We ſhall hear of this widow from Bath: but the plot lies deeper than they are aware

of

of. Enquire they will; and let 'em, ſay I; their anſwer will do 'em no good. "Mr. Lovemore viſit "the widow Bellmour!" We know "no ſuch per-"ſon." That's what they'll get for their pains. Their puzzle will be greater than ever, and they may ſit down to chew the cud of diſappointed malice.—— Huſh! my maſter and Sir Brilliant: I'll take care of a ſingle rogue, and get me out of their way.

[*Exit.*

Enter LOVEMORE *and* SIR BRILLIANT.

LOVEMORE.

My dear Sir Brilliant, I muſt both pity and laugh at you. Thou art metamorphoſed into the moſt whimſical being!

SIR BRILLIANT.

If your raillery diverts you, go on with it. This is always the caſe: apply for ſober advice, and your friend plays you off with a joke.

LOVEMORE.

Sober advice! very far gone indeed. There is no ſuch thing as talking ſoberly to the tribe of lovers. That eternal abſence of mind that poſeſſes you all! There is no ſociety with you. I was damnable company myſelf, when I was one of the pining herd: but a doſe of matrimony has cooled me pretty handſomely; and here comes *repetatur hauſtus*.

Enter MUSLIN.

MUSLIN.

My Lady ſends her compliments, and begs to know how you do this morning.

LOVE-

LOVEMORE. (*aſide to* SIR BRILLIANT.)

The novelty of the compliment is enlivening—It is the devil to be teazed in this manner.—What did you ſay, child?

MUSLIN.

My Lady hopes you find yourſelf well this morning.

LOVEMORE.

Ay, your Lady:—give her my compliments, and tell her—tell her I hope ſhe is well, and—(*yawns.*)

MUSLIN.

She begs you won't think of going out without ſeeing her.

LOVEMORE.

To be ſure, ſhe has ſuch variety every time one ſees her—my head aches woefully—tell your lady—I ſhall be glad to ſee her; I'll wait on her---(*yawns*) tell her what you will.

MUSLIN.

A brute!- -I ſhall let my lady know, Sir.

[*Exit.*

LOVEMORE.

My dear Sir Brilliant, you ſee me an example before your eyes. Put the widow Bellmour out of your head, and let my Lord Etheridge be the victim for you.

SIR

SIR BRILLIANT.

Positively no; my pride is picqued. My Lord Etheridge shall find me a more formidable rival than he imagines. By the way, how long has the noble Peer been in England?

LOVEMORE.

His motions are unknown to me.—(*aside*) I don't like that question.—His Lordship is in France, is not he?

SIR BRILLIANT.

No; he is certainly returned. The match is to be concluded privately.—He visits her *incog.*

LOVEMORE. (*forcing a laugh.*)

Oh! no; that can't be; my Lord Etheridge loves parade. I cannot help laughing. The jealousy of you lovers is for ever conjuring up phantoms to torment yourselves. My dear Sir Brilliant, wait for realities; there are enough in life, and you may teach your fancy to be at rest, and give you no further trouble.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Nay, don't let your fancy run away with you. What I tell you, is the real truth.

LOVEMORE.

Well, if it be true, and if Lord Etheridge is come to England to marry, do you go to France not to marry, and you will have the best of the bargain.

Enter

Enter WILLIAM.

WILLIAM.

Sir Baſhfull Conſtant is in his chariot at the upper end of the ſtreet, and if your Honour is at leiſure, he will wait upon you.

LOVEMORE.

Have not I ſent him word I ſhould be at home? Let him come as ſoon as he will. [*Exit* William] Another inſtance, Sir Brilliant, to deter you from all thoughts of matrimony.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Po! hang him; he his no precedent for me. A younger brother, who lived in middling life, comes to a title and an eſtate on the death of a conſumptive Baronet; marries a woman of quality, and now carries the primitive ideas of his narrow education into high life. Don't you remember when he had chambers in Fig tree court, and uſed to ſaunter and lounge away his time in Temple Coffee houſes? The fellow is as dull as a bill in chancery.

LOVEMORE.

But he is improved ſince that time.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Impoſſible; don't you ſee how he goes on? He knows nothing of the world; if his eyes meet yours, he bluſhes up to his ears, and looks ſuſpicious, as if he imagined you have a deſign upon him.

LOVEMORE.

I can explain that part of his character. He has a mortal averſion to wit and raillery, and dreads nothing ſo much as being laughed at for being particular.

SIR BRILLIANT.

And ſo, fearing to be ridiculous, he becomes ſubſtantially ſo every moment.

LOVEMORE.

Even ſo, and if you look at him, he ſhrinks back from your obſervation, caſting a ſly, ſlow, jealous eye all round him, like Miſs Bumpkin in a country village, aukwardly endeavouring to conceal what the increaſe of her ſhape diſcovers to the whole pariſh.

SIR BRILLIANT.

And then his behaviour to his lady!

LOVEMORE.

Why, as to that point, I don't think he hates her. His fear of ridicule may be at the bottom. He has ſtrange notions about the dignity of a huſband. There is a ſecret, which he would fain tell me, and yet he is ſhy, and he hints, and he heſitates, and then he retreats back into himſelf, and ends juſt where he began. But with all his faults, he has fits of good nature. There;—his chariot's at the door.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Lady Conſtant, you mean, has fits of good nature. Have you made any progreſs there?

LOVE-

LOVEMORE.

That's well from you, who are the formidable man in that quarter.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Oh! no; positively, no pretence, no colour for it.

LOVEMORE.

Don't I know that you have made advances?

SIR BRILLIANT.

Advances! I pity my Lady Constant, and—

LOVEMORE.

Well, that's generous—hush! I hear him coming. Sir Brilliant, I admire your amorous charity of all things.

Enter SIR BASHFULL CONSTANT.

SIR BASHFULL.

Mr. Lovemore, I have taken the liberty—but you seem to be busy, and I intrude perhaps.

LOVEMORE.

Oh, by no means: walk in Sir Bashfull.

SIR BASHFULL.

Sir Brilliant, I am glad to see you. (*Bows awkwardly.*)

SIR BRILLIANT.

You do me honour, Sir. I hope you left my Lady well.

SIR BASHFULL.

I can't ſay, Sir; I am not her phyſician.

SIR BRILLIANT. (*aſide*)

An abſurd brute!—Lovemore, I'll juſt ſtep and pay a ſhort viſit to our friend over the way.

LOVEMORE.

Why in ſuch a hurry?

SIR BRILLANT.

I ſhall return immediately. I'll be with you before you are dreſſed. Sir Baſhfull, I kiſs your hand. [*Exit.*

SIR BASHFULL.

I am glad he is gone. I have ſomething, Mr. Lovemore, that I want to adviſe with you about.

LOVEMORE.

Have you!

SIR BASHFULL.

I have had another bruſh with my wife.

LOVEMORE.

I am ſory for it, Sir Baſhfull.——(*aſide*) I am perfectly glad of it.

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

Pretty warm the quarrel was. She took it in a high tone. Sir Baſhfull, ſays ſhe, I wonder you will diſgrace yourſelf at this rate. You know my pin money is not ſufficient. The Mercer and every body duning me! I can't go on after this faſhion, ſays ſhe, and then ſomething about her quality.—— You know, Mr. Lovemore, (*ſmiling*) ſhe is a woman of high quality.

LOVEMORE.

Yes, and a very fine woman.

SIR BASHFULL.

No, no, no; not much of that—and yet—(*looks at him and ſmiles*) Do you think her a fine woman?

LOVEMORE.

Undoubtedly; where do you ſee any body that outſhines her?

SIR BASHFULL.

Why to be ſure—(*ſmiling*) one does not often ſee her eclipſed. I think ſhe is what you may call a fine woman. She keeps good company.

LOVEMORE.

The very beſt.

SIR BASHFULL.

Yes, yes; your tiptop, none elſe. And yet to encourage her too far were dangerous. Too comply-

ing a husband makes but a sorry figure in the eyes of the world.

LOVEMORE.

The world will talk, Sir Bashfull.

SIR BASHFULL.

Too fast, Mr. Lovemore. Their tongues will run on, and one does not like to give them a subject. I answered her stoutly: Madam, says I, a fig for your quality: I am master in my own house, and who do you think—(*winks at Lovemore*) putting myself in a passion, you know—Who do you think is to pay for your Cats and your Dogs, and your Monkeys, and your Squirrels, and your gaming debts?

LOVEMORE.

How could you? That was sharply said.

SIR BASHFULL.

Yes; I gave it her. But for all that I am main good natured at the bottom.

LOVEMORE.

You was not in earnest then?

SIR BASHFULL.

No, no; that's the point: a man must keep up his own dignity. I'll tell you what I did.

LOVEMORE.

Well;—you did what's proper I dare say.

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

I hope you'll think ſo —Don't laugh at me.—— Come, I will tell you. I went to her Mercer ſilly and paid him the money. (*ſmiling*)

LOVEMORE.

Did you?

SIR BASHFULL. (*Looking alarmed*)

Was not it right?

LOVEMORE.

It was elegant.

SIR BASHFULL.

I am glad you approve. I took care to ſave appearances. One would not have the world know it.

LOVEMORE

By no means.

SIR BASHFULL.

It would make them think me too uxorious.

LOVEMORE.

So it would—(*aſide*) I muſt encourage that notion. While you live, guard againſt being too uxorious. Though our wives deſerve "our fondneſs," the world will laugh at us;—and hark ye, if our wives don't deſerve it, they'll laugh at us the more.

SIR BASHFULL.

I know it. And ſo ſays I, Mr. Luteſtring, there's your money, but tell no body that I paid it ſilly.

LOVEMORE.

Why, that's doing a genteel thing by ſtratagem.—Admirably contrived!

SIR BASHFULL.

I think it was. But I have a deeper ſecret for you.

LOVEMORE.

Have you?

SIR BASHFULL.

I have.—May I truſt you?

LOVEMORE.

Now there you hurt me. I feel that, Sir Baſhfull.

SIR BASHFULL.

I beg your pardon. I know you are my friend. I have great confidence in you. You muſt know---look ye, Mr. Lovemore——you muſt know——

Enter MUSLIN.

MUSLIN.

My lady deſires to know if you chuſe a diſh of tea this morning.

LOVEMORE.

Po! ridiculous!---tell your miſtreſs --- go about your buſineſs. *(Turns her out)*

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

I ſee how it is. He does not care a cherry-ſtone for his wife.

LOVEMORE.

Such impertinence!——Well, Sir Baſhfull.

SIR BASHFULL.

He does not value her a pinch of ſnuff. (*aſide*)

LOVEMORE.

Well, I am all attention.

SIR BASHFULL.

It does not ſignify. A fooliſh affair; I won't trouble you.

LOVEMORE.

Nay, that's unkind. It will be no trouble.

SIR BASHFULL.

Well, well, I—I—Do you think Muſlin did not overhear us?

LOVEMORE.

Not a ſyllable. Come, we are ſafe.

SIR BASHFULL.

I don't know but—let me aſk you a queſtion, firſt. ——Have you any regard for your lady?

LOVEMORE.

The higheſt value for her. But then you know appearances——

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

Right!—I repoſe it with you.—You muſt know, Mr. Lovemore, as I told you, I am at the bottom very good natured, and though it may be thought ——we are interrupted again.

Enter SIR BRILLIANT.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Lovemore, I have paid my viſit.

LOVEMORE.

Pſhaw!—this is unlucky——You are as good as your word, Sir Brilliant.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Perhaps you have buſineſs?

SIR BASHFULL.

No, no buſineſs—*(turns to* LOVEMORE.*)* there's no proceeding now——I was going, Sir Brilliant. Mr. Lovemore, I wiſh you a good day.

LOVEMORE.

Po! prithee, you ſhan't leave me yet.

SIR BASHFULL.

I muſt; I can't ſtay. *(aſide to* LOVEMORE) Another time. Suppoſe you call at my houſe at one o'clock.

LOVEMORE.

With all my heart.

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

Do ſo; nobody ſhall interrupt us. Mr. Lovemore, I take my leave. Sir Brilliant, I kiſs your hand. You won't forget, Mr. Lovemore.

LOVEMORE.

Oh! no; depend upon me.

SIR BASHFULL.

A good morning. He is the only friend I have. [*Exit.*

LOVEMORE.

Ha! ha! you broke in in the moſt critical moment. He was juſt going to be delivered of his ſecret.

SIR BRILLIANT.

I beg your pardon. How could you let me?

LOVEMORE.

Nay, no matter. I ſhall worm it out of him.

Enter MUSLIN.

MUSLIN.

My Lady, Sir, is quite impatient.

LOVEMORE.

Po! for ever teazing! I'll wait upon her preſently. [*Exit* MUSLIN.

SIR

SIR BRILLIANT.

I'll ſtep and chat with her while you dreſs. May I take the liberty?

LOVEMORE.

You know you may: no ceremony. How could you aſk me ſuch a queſtion?——Apropos, Sir Brilliant; I want a word with you. Step with me into the ſtudy for a moment.

SIR BRILLIANT.

I attend you.

LOVEMORE.

Poor Sir Baſhfull!——ha! ha!——a ridiculous, unaccountable——What does he mean?

[*Exeunt.*

Scene another Apartment.

Mrs. LOVEMORE *at her Tea-Table.*

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

This traſh of tea! I don't know why I drink ſo much of it. Heigho!—what keeps Muſlin? Surely never was an unhappy woman treated with ſuch cruel indifference; nay, with ſuch open, ſuch undiſguiſed inſolence of gallantry.

Enter MUSLIN.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Well, Muſlin? have you ſeen his Prime Miniſter?

Mus-

MUSLIN.

Yes, Ma'am, I have ſeen Mr. William. He ſays his maſter is going out, according to the old trade, and he does not expect to ſee him again till to-morrow morning. Mr. Lovemore is now in the ſtudy. Sir Brilliant Faſhion is with him: I heard them, as I paſſed by the door, laughing as loud as two actors in a comedy.

MRS. LOVEMORE.

About ſome precious miſchief, I'll be ſworn, and all at my coſt. Heigho!

MUSLIN.

Dear Ma'am, why chagrine yourſelf about a vile man, that is not worth——no, as I hope for mercy, not worth a ſingle ſigh?

MRS. LOVEMORE.

What can I do, Muſlin?

MUSLIN.

Do, Ma'am——If I was as you, I'd do for him. If I could not cure my grief, I'd find ſome comfort, that's what I would.

MRS. LOVEMORE.

Comfort? Alas; there is none for me.

MUSLIN.

And whoſe fault then?—Would any body but you——it provokes me to think of it——Would any but you,——young, handſome, with wit, graces, talents, would any body, with ſo many accompliſh-

ments,

ments, ſit at home here, as melancholy as a poor ſervant out of place?——And all for what? For a huſband? And ſuch a huſband! What do you think the world will ſay of you, Ma'am?

Mrs. Lovemore.

I care not what they ſay. I am tired of the world, and the world may be tired of me, if it will. My troubles are to myſelf only, and I muſt endeavour to bear them. Who knows what patience may do? If Mr. Lovemore has any feeling left, my conduct and his own heart may one day incline him to do me juſtice.

Muslin.

But, dear Ma'am, that's waiting for dead men's ſhoes. Incline him to do you juſtice!—What ſignifies expecting and expecting? Give me a bird in the hand. If all the women in London, who happen to be in your caſe, were to ſit down, and die of the ſpleen, what would become of the public places? They might turn Vauxhall to a hop-garden; make a brewhouſe of Ranelagh, and let both the Playhouſes to a methodiſt-preacher. We ſhould not have the racketting we have now. John, let the horſes be put to—John, go to my Lady Trump-abouts, and invite her to a ſmall party of twenty or thirty card tables.——John, run to my Lady Catgut, and let her know I'll wait upon her Ladyſhip to the Opera---John, run as faſt as ever you can, with my compliments to Mr. Varney, and tell him it will be the death of me, if I have not a box for the new play.---Lord bleſs you, Ma'am, they rantipole it about this town, with as unconcerned looks, and as florid outſides, as if they were treated at home like ſo many goddeſſes; though every body knows poſſeſſion has un-

ungoddeſſed them all long ago, and their huſbands care no more for them, no, by Jingo, no more than they do for their huſbands.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

At what a rate you run on?

MUSLIN.

It is enough to make a body run on. If every body thought like you, Ma'am——

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

If every body loved like me!

MUSLIN.

A braſs thimble for love, if it is not returned by love. What the deuce is here to do? Love for love is ſomething: but to love alone, where's the good of that? Shall I go and fix my heart upon a man, who ſhall deſpiſe me for that very reaſon? And, ay, ſays he, "Poor fool! I ſee ſhe adores me. The woman's "well enough, only ſhe has one inconvenient cir-"cumſtance about her; I am married to her, and "marriage is the devil."

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Will you have done?

MUSLIN.

I have not half done, Ma'am. And when the vile man goes a rogueing, he ſmiles impudently in your face, "and I am going to the chocolate houſe, my "dear; amuſe yourſelf in the mean time, my love." Fy upon 'em; I know 'em all. Give me a huſband that

that will enlarge the circle of my innocent pleaſures; but a huſband now a days, is no ſuch a thing. A huſband now is nothing but a ſcare-crow, to ſhew you the fruit, but touch it if you dare. The devil's in 'em, the Lord forgive me for ſwearing. A huſband is a mere bugbear, a ſnap-dragon, a monſter; that is to ſay, if one makes him ſo, then he is a monſter indeed; and if one does not make him ſo, then he behaves like a monſter; and of the two evils, by my troth——But here, Ma'am, here comes one who can tell you all about it. Here comes Sir Brilliant: aſk his advice, Ma'am.

Mrs. Lovemore.

His advice?——Aſk advice of the man, who has eſtranged Mr. Lovemore's affections from me?

Muslin.

Well I proteſt and vow, I think Sir Brilliant a very pretty gentleman. He is the very pink of the faſhion. He dreſſes faſhionably, lives faſhionably, wins your money faſhionably, loſes his own faſhionably, and does every thing faſhionably; and then he looks ſo lively, and ſo much to ſay, and ſo never at a loſs!——but here he comes.

Enter Sir Brilliant.

Sir Brilliant.

Mrs. Lovemore, my dear Ma'am, always in a vis-a-vis party with your *ſuivante?*---Afford me your pardon, if I ſay this does a little wear the appearance of being out of humour with the world.

Mrs.

Mrs. Lovemore.

Far from it, Sir Brilliant. We were engaged in your panegyrick.

Sir Brilliant.

My panegyrick? Then am I come moſt apropos to give the portrait a few finiſhing touches. Mr. Lovemore, as ſoon as he is dreſſed, will wait upon you: in the mean time, I can help you to ſome anecdotes, which will enable you to colour your canvaſs a little higher.

Mrs. Lovemore.

Among thoſe anecdotes, I hope you will not omit the bright exploit of ſeducing Mr. Lovemore from all domeſtic happineſs.

(*ſhe make a ſign to* Muslin *to go*)

Sir Brilliant.

I, Madam?—Let me periſh if ever——

Mrs. Lovemore.

Oh! Sir, I can make my obſervations.

Sir Brilliant.

May fortune eternally forſake me, and beauty frown on me, if I am conſcious of any plot upon earth.

Mrs. Lovemore.

Don't aſſert too ſtrongly, Sir Brilliant.

Sir Brilliant.

May I never throw a winning caſt—

Mrs. Lovemore.

It is in vain to deny it, Sir.

Sir Brilliant.

May I loſe the next ſweepſtakes, if I have ever, in thought, word or deed, been acceſſary to his infidelity. I alienate the affections of Mr. Lovemore! Conſider, Madam, how would this tell in Weſtminſter Hall? Sir Brilliant Faſhion, what ſay you, guilty of this indictment or not guilty? Not guilty, poſs. Thus iſſue is joined. You enter the court: but, my dear Madam, veil thoſe graces that adorn your perſon: abate the fire of thoſe charms: ſo much beauty will corrupt the judges: give me a fair trial.

Mrs. Lovemore.

And thus you think to laugh it away.

Sir Brilliant.

Nay, hear me out. You appear in court: you charge the whole upon me, without a ſyllable as to the how, when, and where? No proof poſitive; the proſecution ends, and I begin my defence.

Mrs. Lovemore.

And by playing theſe falſe colours you think I am to be amuſed?

Sir Brilliant.

Nay, Mrs. Lovemore, I am now upon my defence. Only hear.—You will pleaſe to conſider, Gentlemen of the Jury, that Mr. Lovemore is not a minor, nor I his guardian. He loves gaiety, pleaſure, and enjoyment:

joyment : is it my fault ? He is poſſeſſed of talents and a taſte for pleaſure, which he knows how to gratify : can I reſtrain him ? He knows the world, makes the moſt of life, and plucks the fruit that grows around him : am I to blame ? This is the whole affair.—How ſay you, Gentlemen of the Jury ? —Not Guilty. There, you ſee how it is. I have cleared myſelf.

Mrs. Lovemore.

Briſk, lively, and like yourſelf, Sir Brilliant ! But if you can imagine this bantering way—

Sir Brilliant.

Acquitted by my country, Ma'am; fairly acquitted.

Mrs. Lovemore.

After the very edifying counſel which you give to Mr. Lovemore, this looſe ſtrain is not in the leaſt ſurprizing. And, Sir, your late project—

Sir Brilliant.

My late project !

Mrs. Lovemore.

Your late project, Sir. Not content with leading Mr. Lovemore into a thouſand ſcenes of diſſipation, you have introduced him lately to your miſtreſs Bellmour. You underſtand me, Sir.

Sir Brilliant.

Ma'am, he does not ſo much as know the Widow Bellmour.

Mrs. Lovemore.

Nay, Sir Brilliant, have a care: juſtify it if you can, or give it a turn of wit. There is no occaſion to hazard yourſelf too far.

Sir Brilliant.

Falſehood I diſdain, Madam, and I, Sir Brilliant Faſhion, declare that Mr. Lovemore is not acquainted with the Widow Bellmour. And if he was, what then? Do you know the lady?

Mrs. Lovemore.

I know her, Sir? A perſon of that character?

Sir Brilliant.

Oh!——I ſee you don't know her: but I will let you into her whole hiſtory.——Pray be ſeated—you ſhall know her whole hiſtory, and then judge for yourſelf. The Widow Bellmour, Madam——

Lovemore. *(within)*

William, are the horſes put to?

Sir Brilliant.

We are interrupted.

Enter Lovemore.

Lovemore.

Very well: let the carriage be brought round directly.——How do you do, my dear?—Sir Brilliant I beg your pardon.—My Love, you don't anſwer

ſwer me: how do you do this morning? *(with an air of cold civility)*

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

A little indiſpoſed in mind: but indiſpoſition of the mind is of no conſequence: nobody pities it.

LOVEMORE.

I beg your pardon, Mrs. Lovemore. Indiſpoſition of the mind—Sir Brilliant, that's a mighty pretty ring on your finger.

SIR BRILLIANT.

A bauble: will you look at it? *(gives the ring)*

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Though I have but few obligations to Sir Brilliant, I ſuppoſe I am to aſcribe to him the favour of this viſit, Mr. Lovemore.

LOVEMORE.

(looking at the ring, and laughing)

Now there you wrong me.—Your enquiries about my health have been very obliging this morning, and I came to return the compliment before I go out.—It is ſet very neatly. *(gives back the ring)*

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Are you going out, Sir?

LOVEMORE.

A matter of buſineſs——How I do hate buſineſs!—But buſineſs *(examining his ruffles)*—buſineſs muſt

be done.—Pray is there any news?---Any news, my dear?

Mrs. Lovemore.

It would be news to me, Sir, if you would be kind enough to let me know whether I may expect the favour of your company at dinner to-day.

Lovemore.

It would be impertinent in me to answer such a question, for I can give no direct answer to it.---I am the slave of events; just as things happen; perhaps I may; perhaps not. But don't let me be of any inconvenience to you. Is it material where a body eats?---Have you heard what happened to me?

(*aside to* Sir Brilliant.)

Sir Brilliant.

When and where?

Lovemore.

A word in your ear---with your permission, Ma'am?

Mrs. Lovemore.

That cold, contemptuous civility, Mr. Lovemore---

Lovemore.

Po! prithee now, how can you?---that is very peevish, and very illnatured.—(*turning to* Sir Brilliant) I lost very thing I played for after you went. The foreigner and he understand one another.---I beg your pardon, Mrs. Lovemore; it was only about an affair at the Opera.

Mrs.

Mrs. Lovemore.

The Opera or any thing is more agreeable than my company.

Lovemore.

Now there again you wrong me. (*to* Sir Brilliant) We dine at the St. Alban's.—How can you Mrs. Lovemore? I make it a point not to incommode you. You poſſibly may have ſome private party; and it would be unpolite in me to obſtruct your ſchemes of pleaſure. Would not it, Sir Brilliant?

Sir Brilliant.

Oh!—Gothick to the laſt degree!

Lovemore.

Very true; vulgar and mechanick! (*both ſtand laughing.*)

Mrs. Lovemore.

Go on; make ſport for yourſelves, gentlemen.

Lovemore.

Ho! ho! ho! I am ſore with laughing.—If you, Madam, have arranged an agreeable party, for me to be preſent, it would look as if we lived together like Sir Baſhfull Conſtant and his Lady, who are always, like two Game-cocks, ready armed to goad and ſpur one another. Hey! Sir Brilliant?

Sir Brilliant.

Oh! the very thing: or like Sir Theodore Traffic

at Tunbridge taking his wife under the arm in the public rooms, and "come along home, I tell you."

LOVEMORE.

Exactly so. (*Both continue laughing.*) Odds my life! I shall be beyond my time (*looks at his watch*) any commands into the city, my dear?

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Commands!—no, Sir, I have no commands.

LOVEMORE.

I have an appointment at my banker's. Sir Brilliant, you know old Discount?

SIR BRILLIANT.

He that was in Parliament, and had the large contract?

LOVEMORE.

The same: ENTIRE BUTT, I think, was the name of his Borough. Can I set you down?

SIR BRILLIANT.

No my carriage waits. I shall rattle half the town over presently.

LOVEMORE.

As you will. Sir Brilliant will entertain you, Ma'am. *Au revoir*, my love.—Sir Brilliant, yours.—Who waits there?

[*Exit singing.*

SIR

SIR BRILLIANT.

Bon voyage.—You ſee, Madam, that I don't deprive you of his company.

MRS. LOVEMORE.

Your influence is now unneceſſary. It is grown habitual to him: he will drive to your Mrs. Bellmour, I ſuppoſe.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Apropos; that brings us back to the little hiſtory I was going to give you of that Lady. What is your charge againſt her? That ſhe is amiable? Granted. Young, gay, rich, handſome, with enchanting talents, it is no wonder all the pretty fellows are on their knees to her. Her manner ſo entertaining! that quickneſs of tranſition from one thing to another! that round of variety! and every new attitude does ſo become her; and ſhe has ſuch a feeling heart, and with an air of giddineſs ſo nice a conduct!

MRS. LOVEMORE.

Mighty well, Sir: ſhe is a very veſtal. Finiſh your portrait. A veſtal from your ſchool of painting muſt be a curioſity.—But how comes it, Sir, if ſhe is this wonder, that your honourable propoſals are at an end there?

SIR BRILLIANT.

Compulſion, Ma'am: it is not voluntary. My Lord Itheridge is the happy man. I thought he was out of the kingdom; but his lordſhip is with her

her ev'ry evening. I can ſcarce gain admittance; and ſo all that remains for me, is to do juſtice to the lady, and conſole myſelf in the beſt way I can for the inſufficiency of my pretenſions.

Mrs. Lovemore.

And am I to believe all this?

Sir Brilliant.

May the firſt woman I pay my addreſſes to, ſtrike me to the centre with a ſupercilious eyebrow, if every ſyllable is not minutely true.—So that you ſee, I am not the cauſe of your inquietude.—There is not in the world a perſon, who more earneſtly aſpires to prove the tender eſteem he bears you.—I have long panted for an opportunity---by all that's ſoft ſhe liſtens to me (*aſide*)---I have long panted, Ma'am, for a tender moment like this---

Mrs. Lovemore.

(*looking gravely at him*)

Sir!

Sir Brilliant.

I have panted with all the ardour, which charms like your's muſt kindle in every heart—

Mrs. Lovemore. (*walks away*)

This liberty, Sir—

Sir Brilliant.

Conſider, Madam: we have both cauſe of diſcontent; both diſappointed; both croſſed in love; and

and the leaſt we can do is both to join, and ſweeten each other's cares.

Mrs Lovemore.

And your friend, Sir, who has juſt left you—

Sir Brilliant.

He, Madam, for a long time—I have ſeen it, with vexation ſeen it,—yes, he has long been falſe to honour, love, and you.

Mrs. Lovemore.

Sir Brilliant, I have done. You take my wrongs too much to heart, Sir—(*rings a bell*)

Sir Brilliant.

" Thoſe eyes that tell us what the ſun is made of;
" Thoſe hills of driven ſnow!"---

Mrs. Lovemore.

Will nobody anſwer there?

Enter Muslin.

Sir Brilliant.

Madam, I deſiſt: when you are in better humour, recollect what I have ſaid. Your adorer takes his leave. Sir Brilliant, mind your hits, and her ſtrait-laced virtue will ſurrender at laſt. Madam---

[*Bows reſpectfully*; *Exit.*

Muslin.

As I live and breathe, Ma'am, if I was as you, I would not fluſter myſelf about it.

Mrs.

Mrs. Lovemore.

About what?

Muslin.

What ſignifies mincing the matter? I heard it all.

Mrs. Lovemore.

You did? did you? (*looks angrily*)

Muslin.

Ma'am!

Mrs. Lovemore.

Impertinence! (*walks about*) Oh! Mr. Lovemore!---To make his character public, and render him the topick of every tea-table throughout this town: I muſt avoid that.

Muslin.

What the deuce is here to do?---An unmannerly thing, for to go for to huff me in this manner! (*aſide*)

Mrs. Lovemore.

That would only widen the breach, and inſtead of neglect, might call forth reſentment, and ſettle at laſt into a fixed averſion: lawyers, parting, and ſeparate maintenance!---What muſt be done?

Muslin.

What is ſhe thinking of now?---A ſulky thing, not

not to be more familiar with ſuch a friend as I am. ---Did you ſpeak to me, Ma'am?

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

It may ſucceed: ſuppoſe I try it---Muſlin.

MUSLIN.

Ma'am. (*running to her*)

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

You heard Sir Brilliant ſay that Mr. Lovemore is not acquainted with the Widow?

MUSLIN.

Lard, Ma'am, he is as full of tricks as a French milliner. I know he does viſit there: I know it from William. I'll be hanged in my own garters, if he does not.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

I know not what to do. Let my chair be got ready.

MUSLIN.

Your chair, Ma'am!---Are you going out?

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Let me hear no more queſtions: do as I order you. [*Exit.*

MUSLIN.

Which way is the wind now? No matter; ſhe does not know what ſhe'd be at. If ſhe would but take my advice,--go abroad, viſit every where, ſee the

the world, throw open her doors, give balls, aſſemblies, concerts; ſing, dance, dreſs, ſpend all her money, run in debt, ruin her huſband; there would be ſome ſenſe in that: the man would ſtay at home then to quarrel with her. She would have enough of his company. But no; mope, mope for ever; heigho! teaze, teaze; Muſlin, ſtep to William; where's his maſter? When did he come home? How long has he been up? A fine life truly!---I love to be in the faſhion, for my part. Bleſs me, I had like to have forgot. Mrs. Marmalet comes to my rout to night. She might as well ſtay away: ſhe is nothing but meer lumber. The formal thing won't play higher than ſhilling whiſt. How the devil does ſhe think I can make a ſhilling party for her? There is no ſuch a thing now a days: no body plays ſhilling whiſt now, unleſs I was to invite the trades-people: but I ſhan't let myſelf down for Madam Marmalet, that I promiſe her.

End of the FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT the SECOND.

Scene an Apartment at SIR BASHFULL CONSTANT'S.

Enter SIR BASHFULL.

SIR BASHFULL.

DID not I hear a rap at the door? Yes, yes, I did; I am right. The carriage is juſt now driving away. Who anſwers there? Sideboard; ſtep hither, Sideboard. I muſt know who it is: my wife keeps the beſt company in England. Hold, I muſt be wary. Servants love to pry into their maſters ſecrets.

Enter SIDEBOARD.

SIR BASHFULL.

Whoſe carriage was that at the door?

SIDEBOARD.

The Dutcheſs of Hurricane, your honour.

SIR BASHFULL.

The Dutcheſs of Hurricane? *(Walks aſide and ſmiles)* A woman of great rank!—what did ſhe want?

SIDEBOARD.

She has left this card for my Lady.

SIR BRILLIANT.

A card? Let me ſee it. *(Reads.)* *The Dutcheſs of*

of Hurricane presents compliments to Lady Constant. She has left the hounds and the foxes, and the brutes, that gallop after them, to their own dear society for the rest of the winter, Her Grace keeps Wednesdays at Hurricane-House for the rest of the winter.---Make me thankful, here's a card from a Dutchess !---what have you there ?

SIDEBOARD.

A parcel of cards, that have been left here this morning.

SIR BASHFULL.

All these in one morning ? (*looks at them*) Why I may as well keep an Inn; may as well keep the Coach and Horses in Piccadilly. (*reads fast*) *Lady Riot*---Mrs. *Allnight*---The *Dutchess of Carmine*---look ye there, another Dutchess ! *Lady Basset*---*Lord Pleurisie*---the *Countess of Ratifie*---*Sir Richard Lungs*---*Lord Laudanum*---*Sir Charles Valerian*---*Lady Hectick*---*Lady Mary Gabble*---I can't bear all this, Sideboard --(*aside and smiling*) I cant bear the pleasure of it: all people of tip-top condition to visit my wife!

Enter FURNISH.

SIR BASHFULL.

What's the matter, Furnish ?

FURNISH.

The mattter, Sir ?---Nothing's the matter.

SIR BASHFULL.

What are you about ? Where are you going ? What have you to do now ?

FUR-

FURNISH.

Only to tell the chairmen they muſt take Black George with his flambeau with them this evening, and carry the chair to pay viſits for my lady.

SIR BASHFULL.

An empty chair to pay viſits!—what polite ways people of faſhion have got of being intimate with each other!—(*aſide*) abſurd as it is, I am glad to ſee my wife keep pace with the beſt of them. I laugh at it, and yet I like it.—Wounds! I ſhall be found out by my ſervants.—I tell you, Sideboard, and you Mrs. Buſy Body, that your Miſtreſs leads a life of noiſe and hurry, and cards and dice, and vanity, and nonſenſe, and I am reſolved to bear it no longer.---Don't I hear her coming?

FURNISH.

My lady is coming, Sir.

SIR BASHFULL. (*aſide and ſmiling*)

She looks charmingly.---Now I'll tell her roundly a piece of my mind. You ſhall ſee who commands in this houſe.

Enter LADY CONSTANT.

SIR BASHFULL. (*ſteals a look*)

I could almoſt give up the point when I look at her.—So, madam, I have had my houſe full of duns again to day.

LADY CONSTANT.

Obliging creatures, to call ſo often. What did they want?

SIR BASHFULL.

Want!—what ſhould they want but money?

LADY CONSTANT.

And you paid them, I ſuppoſe.

SIR BASHFULL.

You ſuppoſe!—'ſdeath, madam, what do you take me for?

LADY CONSTANT.

I took you for a huſband: my brother preſcribed you. But his preſcription has done me no good.

SIR BASHFULL.

Nor me either: I have had a bitter pill of it.

LADY CONSTANT.

But the pill was gilded for you. My fortune, I take it, has paid off the old family mortage on your eſtate.

SIR BASHFULL.

And at the rate you go on, a new mortage will ſwallow up my eſtate.---I ſee you are an ungratefull woman.

LADY CONSTANT.

That is, as you keep the account.

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

And my accounts will ſhew it. Day after day nothing but extravagance to gratify your vanity. Did not I go into parliament to pleaſe you? Did not I go down to the Borough of *Smoke-and-Sot*, and get drunk there for a whole month together? Did not I get mobbed at the George and Vulture? And pelted and horſewhipped the day before the election? And was not I obliged to ſteal out of the town in a rabbit-cart? And all this to be ſomebody as you call it? Did not I ſtand up in the houſe to make a ſpeech to ſhew what an Orator you had married? And did not I expoſe myſelf? Did I know whether I ſtood upon my head or my heels for half an hour together? And did not a great man from the Treaſury-bench tell me never to ſpeak again?

LADY CONSTANT.

And why not take his advice?

SIR BASHFULL.

What in the name of common ſenſe had to I do in Parliament? My country! what's my country to me? The debts of the nation, and your gaming debts are nothing to me. I muſt help to pay both, muſt I? I can vote againſt taxes, and I can advertize in the Gazette to ſecure me from your extravagance. I have not lived in the Temple for nothing.

FURNISH.

He ſlept there, and calls it ſtudying the law.

SIR BASHFULL.

Hold you your tongue, Mrs. Pert: leave the room. Go both about your buſineſs.

[*Exeunt* FURNISH *and* SIDEBOARD.

SIR BASHFULL. (*aſide*)

I have kept it up before my ſervants. (*Looks at Lady Conſtant*) She is a fine woman after all.

LADY CONSTANT.

Is there never to be an end of this uſage, Sir? Am I to be for ever made unhappy by your humours.

SIR BASHFULL.

Humours! good ſenſe and ſound judgement, in in the fine lady's dictionary, are to be called humours?

LADY CONSTANT.

And your humours are now grown inſupportable.

SIR BASHFULL.

Your profuſion is inſupportable. At the rate you go on, how am I to find money for my next election? ---If you would but talk this matter over cooly--- She talks like an angel, and I wiſh I could ſay (*aſide*) the ſame of myſelf.---What will the world think?--- Only command your temper--what will they think, if I am ſeen to encourage your way of life?

LADY CONSTANT.

Amuſe yourſelf that way, Sir.---Avoid one error, and run into the oppoſite extreme.

SIR

SIR BASHFULL. *(aſide)*

There; a tranſlation from Horace—*Dum vitant ſtulti vitia*—She is a notable woman.

LADY CONSTANT.

Let me tell you, there is not in life a more ridiculous ſight than the perſon, who guards, with imaginary wiſdom, againſt one gyant-vice, and leaves himſelf open to a million of abſurdities.

SIR BASHFULL. *(aſide)*

I am nothing to her in an argument—ſhe has a tongue that can reaſon me out of my ſenſes.—I could almoſt find it in my heart to tell her the whole truth. —You know, my Lady Conſtant, that when you want any thing in reaſon—

LADY CONSTANT.

Is it unreaſonable to live with decency? Is it unreaſonable to keep the company my rank and education have entitled me to? Is it unreaſonable to conform to the modes of life, when your fortune can ſo well afford it?

SIR BASHFULL. *(aſide)*

She is a very reaſonable woman, and I wiſh I had but half her ſenſe.—You know I am good natured in the main, and if a ſum of money within a moderate compaſs—If a brace of hundreds—*(aſide)* why ſhould not I make it three?—I know that you have contracted habits of life, and *(in a ſoftened tone)* habit, I know is not eaſily conquered: and if three *(ſmiling)* hundred pounds will prevent diſputes, why

why *(ſmiling)* as to the matter of three hundred pounds——

Enter FURNISH, *with a band box.*

FURNISH.

Your Ladyſhip's things from the milliner's.

SIR BASHFULL.

Death and fury! this woman has overheard me. Three hundred pounds, madam! *(in a violent paſſion)* let me tell you that three hundred pounds ---what right have you to ſhovel away three hundred pounds?

LADY CONSTANT.

Why does the man fly out into ſuch a paſſion?

SIR BASHFULL.

I will allow no ſuch doings in my houſe. Don't I often come when my hall is beſieged with a parcel of powder-monkey ſervants? And did not I the other day, before I could get into my own doors, entangle myſelf among the chairmen's poles, and was not I confined there, like a man in the ſtocks?

LADY CONSTANT.

Why would you be ſo aukward?

SIR BASHFULL.

An eternal ſcene of routs and drums. Have not I ſeen you put the fee ſimple of a ſcore of my beſt acres upon a ſingle card? And have not I muttered to myſelf, if that woman was as much in love with me

me as ſhe is with PAM, what an excellent wife ſhe would make?

LADY CONSTANT.

PAM is very obliging: why wont you ſtrive to be as agreeable?

SIR BASHFULL.

'Sdeath, Madam, you are ſo fond of play that I ſhould not wonder to ſee my next child marked on the forehead with a pair royal of aces.

FURNISH.

I am ſure you deſerve to be marked on the forehead with a pair of——

SIR BASHFULL.

Malapert huſſey! do you meddle? Begone this moment.

[*Exit* FURNISH.

LADY CONSTANT.

Fy upon it, Sir Baſhfull! I am tired of bluſhing for you.

SIR BASHFULL.

I am afraid I have gone too far: ſhe is aſhamed of me. (*aſide*)

LADY CONSTANT.

You agreed to a ſeperation the other day, and there remains nothing but to execute articles, and make an end of all this diſquiet.

SIR BASHFULL.

A ſeperate maintenance will go but a little way to anſwer the bawling of Milliners, Mercers, Jewellers, and gaming debts.

LADY CONSTANT.

It will purchaſe content, and nothing can obtain that under your roof.

SIR BASHFULL. (*aſide*)

I have ſhot my bolt too far---I fancy, my Lady Conſtant, that you don't know me. We might explain matters, and---'ſdeath! (*aſide*) I am going to blab---I ſay, madam, if you underſtood me rightly---as to the authority of a huſband, I might perhaps be brought to give it up, in part at leaſt; and if no body was the wiſer, I might connive---Po! confuſion! interrupted again by that——

Enter FURNISH.

FURNISH.

A ſervant from Mrs. Lovemore, Madam, to know---

SIR BASHFULL.

The authority of a huſband I never will give up---

LADY CONSTANT.

A ſtorm, a whirlwind is fitter to converſe with.

SIR BASHFULL.

will ſtorm like a whirlwind in my own houſe. I have

have done, Madam; you are an ungovernable woman---(*aſide and ſmiling*) ſhe is a charming woman, and if nobody ſaw it, I would let her govern me with all my heart.

[*Exit.*

LADY CONSTANT.

Did any body ever ſee ſuch behaviour?

FURNISH.

Never, and how your ladyſhip bears it, I can't tell.

LADY CONSTANT.

That it ſhould be my fate to be married to ſuch a quickſand! What does Mrs. Lovemore ſay?

FURNISH.

If your ladyſhip will be at home, ſhe intends to do herſelf the pleaſure of waiting upon you, Madam.

LADY CONSTANT.

Very well; I ſhall be at home. Upon recollection, I want to ſee her. Let the ſervant wait: I'll write an anſwer. [*Exit.*

Scene another Apartment.

Enter SIR BASHFULL *and* LOVEMORE.

SIR BASHFULL.

Walk in, Mr. Lovemore, walk in. I am heartily glad to ſee you. This is kind.

LOVE

LOVEMORE.

I am ready, you ſee, to attend the call of friendſhip.

SIR BASHFULL.

Mr. Lovemore, you are a friend indeed.

LOVEMORE.

You do me honour, Sir Baſhfull. And your lady, how does ſhe do?

SIR BASHFULL.

Perfectly well: In great ſpirits. *(ſmiling at Lovemore)* I never ſaw her look better: but we have had t'other ſkirmiſh ſince I ſaw you.

LOVEMORE.

Another!

SIR BASHFULL.

Ay, another; and I did not bate her an ace. She is a rare one to argue. She is fit to diſcuſs a point with any man.—No body like her. Wit at will; I thought I managed the diſpute, and that I ſhould ſoon have had her at a what you call a *non-plus*. But no, no; no ſuch thing. She can give you a ſharp turn in a moment.

LOVEMORE.

Ay!

SIR BASHFULL.

Give her her due, I am nothing to her. I thought I had

I had her faſt, but ſhe went round me, quick as lightening; and would you believe it? (*looks highly pleaſed*) She did not leave me a word to ſay.

LOVEMORE.

Well! that was hard upon you.

SIR BASHFULL.

No, not hard at all. Thoſe little victories I don't mind. You know I told you I have ſomething for your private ear. Have you obſerved nothing odd and ſingular in me?

LOVEMORE.

Not in the leaſt. In the whole circle of my acquaintance I know no body ſo little tinged with oddity.

SIR BASHFULL.

What, have you ſeen nothing? (*laughs*) Have you remarked nothing particular in regard to my wife?

LOVEMORE.

Why, you don't live happy with her: but that is not a ſingular caſe.

SIR BASHFULL.

But I tell you—this muſt be in confidence—I am at the bottom a very odd fellow.

LOVEMORE.

You do yourſelf injuſtice, Sir Baſhfull.

SIR BASHFULL.

No, not in the leaſt. It is too true—I am in the main

main a very odd fellow; I am indeed; as odd a fiſh as lives; and you muſt have ſeen it before now.

LOVEMORE.

I ſee it?—I am not apt to ſpy defects in my friends. What can this be? You are not jealous, I hope.

SIR BASHFULL.

You have not hit the right nail on the head. No, not jealous. Do her juſtice, I am ſafe as to that point. My lady has high notions of honour. No, it is not that.

LOVEMORE.

Not a ray of light to guide me: explain, Sir Baſhfull.

SIR BASHFULL. (*ſmiling at him*)

You could never have imagined it. But firſt let me ſhut this door.

LOVEMORE.

What whim has got poſſeſſion of him now?

SIR BASHFULL.

Mr. Lovemore, I have great dependance upon you. I am going to make a diſcovery---I bluſh at the very thought of it (*Turns away*).

LOVEMORE.

Be a man, Sir Baſhfull; out with it at once; let me adviſe you.

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

The very thing I want. The affair is—but then if he ſhould betray me!—Mr. Lovemore, I doubt you, and yet eſteem you. Some men there are, who, when a confidence is repoſed in them, take occaſion from thence to hold a hank over their friend, and tyrannize him all the reſt of his days.

LOVEMORE.

O fy! this is ungenerous. True friendſhip is of another quality: It feels from ſympathy; honour is the active principle; and the ſtricteſt ſecrecy is an inviolable rule.

SIR BASHFULL.

Mr. Lovemore, I have no further doubt—ſtay; did not you hear a noiſe?—Don't I ſee a ſhadow moving under the bottom of that door? (*goes to the door*)

LOVEMORE.

What has got into his head?

SIR BASHFULL (*Looking out.*)

Servants have a way of liſtening.

LOVEMORE.

Rank jealouſy! he has it through the very brain!

SIR BASHFULL.

No, no; all's ſafe. Mr. Lovemore, I will make you the depoſitary,—the faithful depoſitary of a ſecret: let it paſs from the bottom of my heart to the inmoſt receſs of yours: there let it reſt concealed from every

every prying eye.—My inclination—There;—I ſee a laugh already forming in every feature of your face.

LOVEMORE.

Then my face is no true index of the mind. Were you to know the agitations in which you keep me by this ſuſpenſe—

SIR BASHFULL.

I believe it. To make an end at once, my inclinations are totally changed—no; not changed; but they are not what they ſeemed to be. Love is the paſſion that poſſeſſes me.—I am in love, and—(*turns from him*) and I am aſhamed of myſelf.

LOVEMORE.

Aſhamed! Love is a noble paſſion: but don't let me hear any more about it. Lady Conſtant will diſcover all, and then the blame will fall on me. If your heart revolts from her, don't let me be thought in league with you. You need not involve me in a quarrel with her ladyſhip.

SIR BASHFULL.

You don't take me right. You are wide, quite wide of the mark. Hear me out.

LOVEMORE.

No, no more. You muſt excuſe me.

SIR BASHFULL.

You ſhall hear me. The object of my paſſion, this charming woman, whom I doat on to diſtraction——

LOVE-

LOVEMORE.

Your pardon; I won't hear it---*(walks away from him)* When her ladyſhip hears of his gallantary, the devil is in the dice, if the ſpirit of revenge does not mould her to my purpoſes.

SIR BASHFULL. *(following* Lovemore)

I ſay, Mr. Lovemore, this adorable creaure——

LOVEMORE.

Keep your ſecret, Sir Baſhfull, *(avoiding him)*

SIR BASHFULL. *(following him)*

Who looks ſo lovely in my eyes——

LOVEMORE.

Well; I dont deſire to know her.

SIR BASHFULL.

You do know her. *(following him)* This idol of my heart,---is my own wife.

LOVEMORE *(ſtares at him)*

Your own wife?

SIR BASHFULL.

Yes, my own wife. *(looks ſilly, and turns away)* It's all over with me: I am undone.

LOVEMORE.

This is the moſt unexpected diſcovery.

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

Look ye there now; he laughs at me already.

LOVEMORE. (*aſide*)

His wife muſt not know this. The graſs is cut under my feet if ſhe ever hears a word of it.

SIR BASHFULL. (*aſide*)

He is ſtruck with amazement, and does not ſay a word to me.

LOVEMORE. (*aſide*)

I muſt not encourage him.---And can this be poſſible, Sir Baſhfull?---In love with your own wife!

SIR BASHFULL.

Spare my confuſion. I have made myſelf very ridiculous. (*Looks at him, and turns away*) I know I have.

LOVEMORE.

Ridiculous? Far from it. Can it be wrong to love a valuable woman? Not to feel the impreſſions of beauty and of merit were downright inſenſibility; but then we ſhould always admire with diſcretion. The folly of us married men conſiſts, in letting our wives perceive the vehemence, with which we love; and the conſequence is, we are enſlaved for the reſt of our lives.---I could truſt you with a ſecret, which perhaps, would keep you in countenance. Could you imagine it? I love my wife.

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

How?

LOVEMORE.

I am in love with my wife.

SIR BASHFULL.

Oh! no, no;---hey! *(looking highly pleased)* you make me laugh. You don't love her, do you?

LOVEMORE.

Passionately; tenderly; with all the ardour of affection.

SIR BASHFULL.

Give me your hand. Ha! ha!---I did not expect this. This is some relief. Ha! ha!--you have made me happy. And have you led the life you have done all this time, on purpose to conceal your regard from her?

LOVEMORE.

For that very purpose. I esteem her; I love her; but I would not have her know it.

SIR BASHFULL.

No?

LOVEMORE.

Upon no consideration, nor would I have the world know it.

SIR BASHFULL.

Perfectly right.

LOVEMORE.

To be ſure. Tell your wife that you eſteem her good qualities, and admire her perſon, ſhe cries VICTORIA, falls to plundering, and then you muſt either break her chain, or wear it in the face of the world, a laughing ſtock for all your acquaintance.

SIR BASHFULL.

That is what I have always been afraid of.

LOVEMORE.

Not without reaſon. The world delights in ridicule. Do you know, if our ſecrets were to tranſpire, that we ſhould have nothing but wit, raillery, and ſleers, and taunts, flying about our ears?

SIR BASHFULL.

But I have taken good care. I have quarrelled with my lady ten times a day on purpoſe to cloak the affair, and prevent all ſuſpicion.

LOVEMORE.

Admirable! I commend your prudence. Beſides, —my Lady Conſtant, you know, has ſome youthful vigour about her; a graceful perſon, and an eye that inflames deſire; and deſire at your time of life, you know——

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

Po! it is not for that; that is nothing. I wear admirably well, Mr. Lovemore.

LOVEMORE.

Do you?

SIR BASHFULL.

As young as ever: but I don't let her know it.

LOVEMORE.

Well! if you are diſcreet in that point, you are a very Machiavel!

SIR BASHFULL.

Yes, yes; I fight cunning. (*laughs*)

LOVEMORE.

Let nothing betray you. Be upon your guard: that is my own plan exactly. You want no advice from me.

SIR BASHFULL.

Pardon me: you can aſſiſt me.—My dear brother ſufferer, give me your hand. We can in a ſly way be of great uſe to each other.

LOVEMORE.

As how?

SIR BASHFULL.

I'll tell you. There are ſome things which you know our wives expect to be done.

LOVEMORE.

So there are.——(*aſide*) What the devil is he at now?

SIR BASHFULL.

Now if you will aſſiſt me——

LOVEMORE.

You may depend upon my aſſiſtance.

SIR BASHFULL.

Thus it is: my wife, you know, keeps a power of company, and makes a great figure there. I could ſhew her in any company in England: I wiſh ſhe could ſay the ſame of me.

LOVEMORE.

Why truly I wiſh ſhe could.

SIR BASHFULL.

But that's out of the queſtion. Now if you will come into my ſcheme—It muſt be a deep ſecret——How? Is that Sir Brilliant's voice?

Enter SIR BRILLIANT.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Sir Baſhfull, you ſee what attraction you have. Lovemore, I did not expect to ſee you here.

LOVEMORE.

Nor did I expect you, Sir Brilliant. (*aſide*)

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

Confuſion!——This unſeaſonable viſit——(*aſide*)

SIR BRILLIANT.

And your lady, is ſhe at home, Sir Baſhfull?

SIR BASHFULL.

Her own people keep that account, Sir: I know nothing of her.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Nay, never talk ſlightingly of a lady, who poſſeſſes ſo many elegant accompliſhments. She has ſpirit, ſenſe, wit and beauty.

SIR BASHFULL. (*aſide*)

Spirit, ſenſe, wit and beauty! ſhe has them all, ſure enough.---Sir, I am no ſworn appraiſer to take an inventory of her effects.---(*aſide*) Hey, Lovemore? (*looks at him and laughs*)

LOVEMORE. (*to Sir Baſhfull*)

Vaſtly well!

SIR BRILLIANT.

Is her ladyſhip viſible this morning?

SIR BASHFULL.

Whether ſhe is viſible or not, is no buſineſs of mine, but I know ſhe is unintelligible this morning, and incomprehenſible this morning. She has the vapours; but your converſation I ſuppoſe will brighten her up for the reſt of the day.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Why, as it happens, I have the rareſt piece of news to communicate to her. Lovemore, you know Sir Amorous la Fool?

LOVEMORE.

He that was Sheriff the other day? Came up with an addreſs, and got himſelf knighted?

SIR BRILLIANT.

The ſame. He declared he would live with his friends upon the ſame familiar footing as before, and his new dignities ſhould make no alteration.

SIR BASHFULL.

I have ſeen the Knight. What of him?

SIR BRILLIANT.

Poor devil. He is in ſuch a ſcrape!

SIR BASHFULL.

What's the matter? Bubbled at play, I ſuppoſe.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Worſe, much worſe.

LOVEMORE.

He has been blackballed at one of the clubs?

SIR BASHFULL.

Or run through the body in a duel?

SIR

SIR BRILLIANT.

Why that's a ſcrape indeed: but it is not that.

SIR BASHFULL.

What then?

SIR BRILLIANT.

So unfortunate a diſcovery! he is fallen in love—I cannot help laughing at him.

LOVEMORE.

Po! fallen in love with ſome coquette, who plays off her airs, and makes a jeſt of him.

SIR BASHFULL.

A young actreſs may be, or an opera ſinger?

SIR BRILLIANT.

No, you will never gueſs. Sir Baſhfull,—like a ſilly devil, he is fallen in love with his own wife.

SIR BASHFULL.

Fallen in love with his own wife! (*ſtares at him*)

SIR BRILLIANT.

Yes; he has made up all quarrels; his jealouſy is at end, and he is to be upon his good behaviour for the reſt of his life.—Could you expect this, Lovemore?

LOVEMORE.

No, Sir; neither I nor my friend Sir Baſhfull expected this.

SIR BASHFULL.

It is a ſtroke of ſurprize to me. (*Looking uneaſy*)

SIR BRILLIANT.

I heard it at my Lady Betty Scandal's, and we had ſuch a laugh: the whole company were in aſtoniſhment: whiſt ſtood ſtill; quadrille laid down the cards, and brag was in ſuſpenſe. Poor Sir Amorous! it is very ridiculous, is not it, Sir Baſhfull?

SIR BASHFULL.

Very ridiculous indeed.---(*aſide*) My own caſe exactly, and my friend Lovemore's too.

SIR BRILLIANT.

The man is loſt, undone, ruined, dead and buried.

LOVEMORE. (*laughing*)

He will never be able to ſhew his face after this diſcovery.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Oh, never; it's all over with him. Sir Baſhfull, this does not divert you; you don't enjoy it.

SIR BASHFULL.

Who I?---I---I---nothing can be more pleaſant, and---I---I laugh as heartily as I poſſibly can. (*forcing a laugh.*)

SIR

SIR BRILLIANT.

Lovemore, you remember Sir Amorous uſed to ſtrut, and talk big, and truly he did not care a pinch of ſnuff for his wife, not he; pretended to be as much at eaſe as Sir Baſhfull about his lady, and as much his own maſter as you yourſelf, or any man of pleaſure about town.

LOVEMORE.

I remember him: but as to Sir Baſhfull and myſelf, we know the world; we underſtand life.

SIR BASHFULL.

So we do; the world will never have ſuch a ſtory of us. Will they Lovemore?

LOVEMORE.

Oh! we are free: we are out of the ſcrape.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Sir Amorous la Fool will be a proverb. Adieu for him the ſide-box whiſper, the ſoft aſſignation, and all the joys of freedom. He is retired with his Penelope, to love one another in the country; and next winter they will come to town, to hate one another.

SIR BASHFULL.

Do you think it will end ſo?

SIR BRILLIANT.

No doubt of it. That is always the denouement of modern matrimony. But I have not told you the worſt of his caſe. Our friend Sir Charles Wildfire, you know, was writing a comedy, and what do you think he has done? He has drawn the character of Sir Amorous, and made him the hero of the play.

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

What put him into a comedy?

SIR BRILLIANT.

Even ſo: it is called "The Amorous Huſband; "or, The Man in Love with his own Wife." Oh! ho! ho! ho!

LOVEMORE.

We muſt ſend in time for places.
(*laughs with Sir Brilliant*)

SIR BASHFULL.

Lovemore carries it with an air. (*aſide*)

SIR BRILLIANT.

Yes, we muſt ſecure places. Sir Baſhfull, you ſhall be of the party.

SIR BASHFULL.

The party will be very agreeable. I ſhall enjoy the joke prodigiouſly. Ha! ha! (*forces a laugh*)

LOVEMORE.

Yes, Sir Baſhfull, we ſhall reliſh the humour.
(*looks at him and laughs*)

SIR BRILLIANT.

The play will have a run: the people of faſhion will crowd after ſuch a character.—I muſt drive to a million of places and put it about; but firſt, with your leave, Sir Baſhfull, I will take the liberty to give

give a hint of the affair to your lady. It will appear ſo ridiculous to her!

SIR BASHFULL.

Do you think it will?

SIR BRILLIANT.

Without doubt: ſhe has never met with any thing like it: has ſhe, Lovemore?

LOVEMORE.

I fancy not: Sir Baſhfull, you take care of that.

SIR BASHFULL.

Yes, yes; I ſhall never be the town-talk.—Hey, Lovemore?

SIR BRILLIANT.

Well, I'll ſtep and pay my reſpects to my Lady Conſtant. Poor Sir Amorous! he will have his horns added to his coat of arms in a little time. Ha! ha! [*Exit.*

SIR BASHFULL.

There, you ſee how it is. I ſhall get lampooned, be-rhymed, and niched into a comedy.

LOVEMORE.

Po! never be frightened at this.— Nobody knows of your weakneſs but myſelf, and I can't betray your ſecret for my own ſake.

SIR BASHFULL.

Very true.

LOVE-

LOVEMORE.

This diſcovery ſhews the neceſſity of concealing our loves. We muſt act with caution. Give my Lady no reaſon to ſuſpect that you have the leaſt regard for her.

SIR BASHFULL.

Not for the world.

LOVEMORE.

Keep to that.

SIR BASHFULL.

I have done her a thouſand kindneſſes, but all by ſtealth; all in a ſly way.

LOVEMORE.

Have you?

SIR BASHFULL.

Oh! a multitude. I'll tell you.—She has been plaguing me a long time for an addition to her jewels. She wants a diamond croſs, and a better pair of diamond buckles. Madam, ſays I, I will have no ſuch trumpery; but then goes I and beſpeaks them of the firſt jeweller in town.—All under the roſe. The buckles are finiſhed: worth five hundred! She will have them this very day, without knowing from what quarter they come.—I can't but laugh at the contrivance—the man that brings them, will run away directly, without ſaying a word.

(laughs heartily)

LOVE-

LOVEMORE.

Sly, fly.—You know what you are about.

SIR BASHFULL.

Ay, let me alone——(*laughs with Lovemore*) And then, to cover the deſign ſtill more, when I ſee her wear her baubles, I can take occaſion to be as jealous as bedlam.

LOVEMORE.

So you can: ha! ha!---(*aſide*) I wiſh he may never be jealous of me in good earneſt.

SIR BASHFULL.

Give me your hand. (*Looks at him and laughs*) I am ſafe I think.

LOVEMORE. (*laughing with him*)

Perfectly ſafe---(*aſide*) if it was not for his own folly.

SIR BASHFULL.

But I was telling you, Mr. Lovemore:---we can be of eſſential uſe to each other.

LOVEMORE.

As how pray?

SIR BASHFULL.

Why, my lady is often in want of money. It would be ridiculous in me to ſupply her. Now if you will take the money from me, and pretend to lend it to her, out of friendſhip, you know——

LOVE-

LOVEMORE.

Nothing can be better—(*aſide*) Here is a fellow pimping for his own horns.—I ſhall be glad to ſerve you.

SIR BASHFULL.

I am for ever obliged to you—here, here; take it now—here it is in bank notes—one, two, three; there is three hundred—give her that, and tell her you have more at her ſervice to morrow or next day, if her occaſions require it.

LOVEMORE.

My good friend, to oblige you (*takes the money*) this is the rareſt adventure!

SIR BASHFULL.

I'll do any thing for you in return.

LOVEMORE.

I ſhall have occaſion for your friendſhip—that is to forgive me, if you find me out. (*aſide*)

SIR BASHFULL.

Loſe no time; ſtep to her now—hold, hold; Sir Brilliant is with her.

LOVEMORE.

I can diſmiſs him. Rely upon my friendſhip: I will make her ladyſhip eaſy for you.

SIR BASHFULL.

It will be kind of you.

LOVE-

LOVEMORE.

It ſhall be her own fault if I don't.

SIR BASHFULL.

A thouſand thanks to you—well, is not this the rareſt project?

LOVEMORE.

It is the neweſt way——of ſatisfying a man's wife!

SIR BASHFULL.

Ay! let this head of mine alone.

LOVEMORE. *(aſide)*

Not if I can help it? Huſh!---I hear Sir Brilliant; he is coming down ſtairs. I'll take this opportunity, and ſtep to her ladyſhip now.

SIR BASHFULL.

Do ſo, do ſo.

LOVEMORE.

I am gone. *(aſide)* Who can blame me now if I cuckold this fellow? [*Exit.*

SIR BASHFULL.

Proſper you, proſper you, Mr. Lovemore. Make me thankfull: he is a true friend. I don't know what I ſhould do without him.

Enter

Enter SIR BRILLIANT.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Sir Baſhfull, how have you managed this?

SIR BASHFULL.

I have no art, no management. What's the matter?

SIR BRILLIANT.

I don't know what you have done, but your lady laughs till ſhe is ready to expire at what I have been telling her.

SIR BASHFULL.

And ſhe thinks Sir Amorous la Fool an object of ridicule?

SIR BRILLIANT.

She does not give credit to a ſingle ſyllable of the ſtory. A man that loves his wife would be a Phœnix indeed! Such a thing might exiſt formerly, but in this poliſhed age is no where to be found. That's her opinion of the matter.

SIR BASHFULL. *(laughs)*

A whimſical notion of her's! and ſo ſhe thinks you may go about with a lanthorn to find a man that ſets any value upon his wife?

SIR BRILLIANT.

You have managed to convince her of it. How the devil do you contrive to govern ſo fine a woman? I know ſeveral, without her pretenſions, who have long

long ago thrown of all reſtraint. You keep up your own dignity.

SIR BASHFULL.

Yes, I know what I am about.

SIR BRILLIANT.

You!—you are quite in the faſhion.—Apropos; I fancy I ſhall want you to afford me your aſſiſtance. You know my Lady Charlotte Modelove? She has a taſte for the Theatre: at Bell Grove-place ſhe has an elegant ſtage, where her ſelect friends amuſe themſelves now and then with a repreſentation of certain comic pieces. We ſhall there act the new comedy, but we apprehend ſome difficulty in the arrangement of the ſeveral characters. Now you ſhall act Sir Amorous, and——

SIR BASHFULL.

I act, Sir?—I know nothing of the character.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Po! ſay nothing of that. In time you may reach the ridiculous abſurdity of it, and play it as well as another.

SIR BASHFULL. *(aſide)*

Confuſion! he does not ſuſpect, I hope—divert yourſelves, Sir, as you may; but not at my expence I promiſe you.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Never be ſo abrupt. Who knows but Lady Conſtant may be the happy wife, the *Cara Spoſa* of the

piece! and then, you in love with her, and ſhe laughing at you for it, will give a zeſt to the humour, which everybody will reliſh in the moſt exquiſite degree.

SIR BASHFULL.

Po! this is too much. You are very pleaſant, but you won't eaſily get me to play the fool.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Well, conſider of it. I ſhall be delighted to ſee my friend Sir Baſhfull tied to his wife's apron-ſtring, and with a languiſhing look melting away in admiration of her charms. Oh! ho! ho! ho!—adieu; a l'honneur; good morning, Sir Baſhfull. [*Exit.*

SIR BASHFULL.

I don't know what to make of all this: But there is no danger. As long as no body knows it, I may venture to love my wife. There will be no harm, while the ſecret is kept as cloſe as night, concealed in tenfold darkneſs, from the wits and ſcoffers of the age.

Enter LOVEMORE.

SIR BASHFULL.

Well, well?--how have you managed?

LOVEMORE.

As I could wiſh: ſhe is infinitely obliged to me, and will never forget the civility.

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

A thouſand thanks to you. I am not ſuſpected?

LOVEMORE.

She has not a diſtant idea of you in this buſineſs. ſhe was rather delicate at firſt, and heſitated, and thought it an indecorum to accept of money even from a friend. But that objection ſoon vaniſhed. I told her it is but too viſible that ſhe is unfortunately yoked with a husband, whoſe humour will never be ſoftened down to the leaſt compliance with her inclinations.

SIR BASHFULL.

That was well ſaid, and had a good effect, I hope.

LOVEMORE.

I hope ſo too.

SIR BASHFULL.

It helps to carry on the plot, you know.

LOVEMORE.

Admirably; it puts things in the train I wiſh.

SIR BASHFULL.

And ſo, to cover the deſign, you gave me the worſt of characters.

LOVEMORE.

I painted you in terrible colours.

SIR BASHFULL.

Do ſo allways, and ſhe will never ſuſpect me of being privy to any civility you may ſhew her.

LOVEMORE.

I would not have you know any thing of my being civil to her for the world. I have ſucceeded thus far. I talked a few muſty ſentences, ſuch as, the perſon, who receives a civility, confers the obligation, and ſo with ſome reluctance ſhe complied at laſt, and things are now upon the footing I would have them. —Death and fury! there comes my wife.

SIR BASHFULL.

Ay, and here comes my wife.

LOVEMORE.

What the devil brings her hither?

SIR BASHFULL. (*aſide*)

Now, now; now let me ſee how he will carry it before Mrs. Lovemore.—Walk in, madam! walk in Mrs. Lovemore.

Enter Mrs. LOVEMORE, *and* LADY CONSTANT, *at oppoſite doors.*

LADY CONSTANT.

Mrs. Lovemore, to ſee you abroad is a novelty indeed.

Mrs.

Mrs. Lovemore.

As great perhaps as that of finding your ladyſhip at home. Mr. Lovemore, I did not expect to have the pleaſure of meeting you.

Lovemore.

Then we are both agreeably ſurprized.

Sir Bashfull.

Now mind how he behaves. (*aſide*)

Mrs. Lovemore.

I thought you were gone to you city-banker.

Lovemore.

And you find that you are miſtaken. I have deferred it till the evening—(*aſide*) 'Sdeath! to be teazed in this manner.

Sir Bashfull. (*aſide*)

No, no; he won't drop the maſk. (*Looks at Lady Conſtant*) She has touched the caſh; I can ſee the bank-notes ſparkling in her eyes.

Mrs. Lovemore.

If you don't go into the city till the evening, may I hope for your company at dinner, Mr. Lovemore?

Lovemore.

The queſtion is entertaining, but as it was ſettled this morning, I think it has loſt the graces of novelty.

SIR BASHFULL.

He won't let her have the leaſt ſuſpicion of hisregard. (*aſide*)

LADY CONSTANT.

I dare ſay Mr. Lovemore will dine at home, if it conduces to your happineſs, Ma'am; and Sir Baſhfull, I take it, will dine at home for the contrary reaſon.

SIR BASHFULL.

Madam, I will dine at home, or I will dine abroad, for what reaſon I pleaſe, and it is my pleaſure to give no reaſon for either.——Lovemore! (*looks at him and ſmiles*)

LOVEMORE (*aſide to Sir Baſhfull.*)

Bravo! what a blockhead it is?

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

As you have your chariot at the door, Mr. Lovemore, if you have no objection, I will ſend away my chair, and you may do me the honour of a place in your carriage.

LOVEMORE.

The honour will be very great to me, but——ſo many places to call at.—If I had known this ſooner——You had better keep your chair.

SIR BASHFULL. (*aſide*)

Cunning! cunning! he would not be ſeen in his chariot

chariot with her for the world. He has more diſcretion than I have.

LADY CONSTANT.

Mrs. Lovemore, ſince you have at laſt ventured to come abroad, I hope you will think it a change for the better. You are too domeſtick. I ſhall expect now to ſee you often: and apropos, I am to have a rout to-morrow evening; if you will do me the honour of your company——

SIR BASHFULL.

A rout to-morrow evening! you have a rout every evening, I think. Learn of Mrs. Lovemore; imitate her example, and don't let me have your hurricane months all the year round in my houſe.—Hip! (*aſide*) Lovemore, how do you like me?

LOVEMORE. (*aſide* to Sir Baſhfull)

You improve upon it every time. But I am loitering here as if I had nothing to do.—My Lady Conſtant, I have the honour to wiſh your ladyſhip a good morning. Sir Baſhfull, your's.—Madam---(*bows gravely to Mrs. Lovemore, hums a tune and Exit*)

SIR BASHFULL. (*aſide*)

He knows how to play the game. I'll try what I can do. Mrs. Lovemore, I have the honour to wiſh you a good morning. Madam---(*bows gravely to Lady Conſtant, hums a tune, and Exit*)

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Two ſuch huſbands!

LADY CONSTANT.

As to my ſwain, I grant you: Mr. Lovemore is at leaſt well-bred; he has an underſtanding, and may in time reflect. Sir Baſhfull never qualifies himſelf with the ſmalleſt tincture of civility.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

If civility can qualify the draught, I muſt allow Mr. Lovemore to have a ſkilful hand. But there is no end of his projects. Every day opens a new ſcene. Another of his intrigues is come to light. I came to conſult with your ladyſhip. I know you are acquainted with the widow Bellmour.

LADY CONSTANT.

The widow Bellmour? I know her perfectly well.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Not ſo well, perhaps, as you may imagine. She has thrown out the lure for my wild gallant, and in order to deceive me——

LADY CONSTANT.

My dear, you muſt be miſtaken. Who tells you this?

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Oh! I can truſt to my intelligence. Sir Brilliant Faſhion, by way of blind to me, has been this morning drawing ſo amiable a picture of the lady—

LADY

LADY CONSTANT.

Sir Brilliant's authority is not always the beſt, but in this point, you may truſt to him.

MRS. LOVEMORE.

But when you have heard all the circumſtances—

LADY CONSTANT.

Depend upon it, you are wrong. I know the widow Bellmour. Her turn of character, and way of thinking——

MRS. LOVEMORE.

Excuſe me, Madam. You decide without hearing me.

LADY CONSTANT.

All ſcandal, take my word for it. However, let me hear your ſtory. We'll adjourn to my dreſſing-room, if you will; and I promiſe to confute all you can ſay.—I would have you know the widow Bellmour: you will be in love with her.—My dear Madam, have not you a tinge of jealouſy?—Beware of that malady. If you ſee things through that medium, I ſhall give you up;

That jaundice of the mind, whoſe colours ſtrike
On friend and foe, and paint them all alike

End of the SECOND ACT.

ACT the THIRD.

Scene, an Apartment at the Widow BELLMOUR's: *ſeveral chairs, a toilette, a book-caſe, and a harpſichord diſpoſed up and down.*

MIGNIONET. *(putting things in order.)*

I Don't well know what to make of this ſame Lord Etheridge. He is coming here again to-day, I ſuppoſe: all this neatneſs, and all this care muſt be for him.—Well, it does not ſignify: *(arranging the chairs)* there is a pleaſure in obeying Madam Bellmour. She is a ſweet lady, that's the truth of it.---'Twere a pity any of theſe men, with their deceitfull arts, ſhould draw her into a ſnare.---But ſhe knows them all. They muſt riſe early who can outwit her.

(ſettling the toilette)

Enter Mrs. BELLMOUR, *reading.*

Oh! bleſt with temper, whoſe unclouded ray
Can make to-morrow chearfull as to-day;
She who can own a ſiſter's charms, and hear
Sighs for a daughter with unwounded ear;
That never anſwers till a huſband cools,
And if ſhe rules him, never ſhews the rules.

Senſible, elegant Pope!

Charms by accepting, by ſubmitting ſways,
Yet has her humour moſt, when ſhe obeys.

(ſeems to read on)

MIG-

MIGNIONET.

Lord love my miſtreſs! always ſo charming, ſo gay, and ſo happy!

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Theſe exquiſite characters of women! they are a ſort of painters gallery, where one ſees the portraits of all one's acquaintance, and ſometimes we ſee our own features too. Mignionet, put this book in it's place.

MIGNIONET.

Yes, ma'am; and there's your toilet looks as elegant as hands can make it.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Does it? I think it does. You have ſome taſte. Apropos, where is my new ſong?——Oh! here it is: I muſt make myſelf miſtreſs of it *(plays upon the harpſichord and ſings a little)* I believe, I have conquered it. *(riſes and goes to her toilet)* This hair is always tormenting me, always in diſorder: this lock muſt be for ever gadding out of it's place. I muſt and will ſubdue it.---Do you know, Mignionet, that this is a very pretty ſong? It was writ by my Lord Etheridge. My Lord has a turn. (*ſings a little*) I muſt be perfect before he comes. (*hums the tune*) Do you know that I think my Lord is one of thoſe men, who may be endured?

MIGNIONET.

Yes, Ma'am, I know you think ſo.

Mrs.

Mrs. Bellmour.

Do you?

Mignionet.

And if I have any ſkill, Ma'am, you are not without a little partiality for his lordſhip.

Mrs. Bellmour.

Really? Then you think I like him perhaps. Do you think I like him? I don't well know how that is. Like him! no, not abſolutely; it is not decided: and yet I don't know, if I had a mind to humour myſelf, and to give way a little to inclination, there is ſomething here in my heart that would be buſy, I believe.---The man has a ſoftneſs of manner, a turn of wit, and does not want ſentiment. Can I call it ſentiment? Yes, I think I may. He has ſentiment; and then he knows the manners, the uſage of the world, and he points out the ridicule of things with ſo much humour!

Mignionet.

You'll be caught, Ma'am; I ſee that.---To be ſure, my lord has a quality-air, and can make himſelf agreeable. But what of that? You know but very little of him. Is a man's character known in three or four week's time? *(Mrs. Bellmour hums a tune)* Do, my dear madam, mind what I ſay: I am at times very conſiderate. I make my remarks, and I ſee very plainly——Lord, ma'am, what am I doing? I am talking to you for your own good, and you are all in the air, and no more mind me, no, no more than if I was nothing at all.

Mrs. Lovemore. *(continues humming a tune)*

You talk wonderfully well upon the ſubject; but

as

as I know how the cards lie, and can play the beſt of the game; and as I have a ſong to amuſe me, one is inclined to give muſical nonſenſe the preference.

MIGNIONET.

I aſſure you, ma'am, I am not one of thoſe ſervants, that bargain for their miſtreſs's inclinations: but you are a going to take a leap in the dark. What does my Lord Etheridge mean, with his chair always brought into the hall, and the curtains cloſe about his ears? Why does he not he come like himſelf, and not care who ſees him? There's ſome myſtery at the bottom, I'll be ſworn there is; and ſo you'll find at laſt.—Dear heart, Ma'am! if you are determined not to liſten, what ſignifies my living with you? At this rate, I am of no ſervice to you.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

There;—I have conquered my ſong. (*runs to her glaſs*) How do I look to day? The eyes do well enough, I think.—And ſo Mignionet, you imagine I ſhall play the fool, and marry my Lord Etheridge?

MIGNIONET.

You have it through the very heart of you: I ſee that.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Do you?—I don't know what to ſay to it. Poor Sir Brilliant Faſhion! if I prefer his rival, what will become of him?—I won't think about it.

Enter

Enter POMPEY.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

What the matter, Pompey?

POMPEY.

A lady in a chair desires to know if your ladyship is at home?

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Has the lady no name?

POMPEY.

Yes; I fancies she has, ma'am; but she did not tell it.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

How aukward!—well, shew the lady up-stairs.

MIGNIONET.

Had not you better receive her in the drawing-room, ma'am? I have not half done my business here.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Oh! you have done very well. There will be less formality here. I dare say it is some intimate acquaintance, though that foolish boy does not recollect her name.—Here she comes. I don't know her.

Enter Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Mrs. LOVEMORE. (*disconcerted*)

I beg pardon for this intrusion.

Mrs.

Mrs. Bellmour.

Pray walk in, ma'am. Mignionet, reach a chair. (*Mrs. Lovemore croſſes the ſtage, and they ſalute each other with an air of diſtant civility*)

Mrs. Lovemore.

I am afraid this viſit from one, who has not the honour of knowing you——

Mrs. Bellmour.

Oh make no apology, ma'am.---Mignionet you may withdraw. (*Exit Mignionet*)

Mrs. Lovemore.

It may appear extraordinary that a ſtranger thus intrudes upon you;—but a particular circumſtance determined me to take this liberty. I hope you will excuſe the freedom.

Mrs. Bellmour.

You do me honour, ma'am; pray no excuſes. A particular circumſtance, you ſay?

Mrs. Lovemore.

I ſhall appear, perhaps, very ridiculous, and indeed I am afraid I have done the moſt abſurd thing! but a lady of your acquaintance—you know my lady Conſtant, ma'am?

Mrs. Bellmour.

Extremely well.

Mrs. Lovemore.

She has given you ſuch an amiable character for bene-

benevolence and a certain elegant way of thinking, entirely your own, that I flatter myſelf, if it is in your power, you will be generous enough to afford me your aſſiſtance.

Mrs. Bellmour.

Lady Conſtant is very obliging. Make a trial of me, ma'am, and if I can be of any uſe——

Mrs. Lovemore.

I fear I ſhall aſk you a ſtrange queſtion:---are you acquainted with a gentleman of the name of Lovemore?

Mrs. Bellmour.

Lovemore? No ſuch name in my liſt.---Lovemore? No;---I recollect no ſuch perſon. The circle of my acquaintance is ſmall: I am almoſt a ſtranger in town.

Mrs. Lovemore.

That makes an end, Ma'am. I beg your pardon. I have given you an unneceſſary trouble. (*going*)

Mrs. Bellmour. (*aſide*)

Mighty odd this! her manner is intereſting.---You have given me no trouble, but my curioſity is excited. (*takes her by the hand*) I beg you will keep your chair. Pray be ſeated.---What can this mean? (*aſide*) Will you be ſo good as to inform me, who the gentleman is?

Mrs. Lovemore.

The ſtory will be unintereſting to you, and to me it

it is painfull. My grievances——*(puts her handkerchief to her eyes)*.

Mrs. BELLMOUR. *(aſide)*

Her grief affects me. *(looks at her till ſhe has recovered herſelf)* I would not importune too much--

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

You have ſuch an air of frankneſs and generoſity, that I will open myſelf without reſerve: I have the tendereſt regard for Mr. Lovemore: I have been married to him theſe two years. I admired his underſtanding, his ſenſibility, and his ſpirit. My heart was his; I loved him with unbounded paſſion. I thought the flame was mutual, and, you may believe I was happy. But of late, there is ſuch a revolution in his temper! I know not what to make of it. I am doomed to be unhappy.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Perhaps not: you may ſtill have much in your power.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

My power is at an end. Inſtead of the looks of affection, and the expreſſions of tenderneſs, with which he uſed to meet me, it is nothing now but cold, averted, ſuperficial civility; while abroad he runs on in a wild career of pleaſure, and to my deep affliction, has attached himſelf entirely to another object.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

And if I had known Mr. Lovemore, do you imagine that my advice or perſuaſion would avail you any thing?

Mrs. Lovemore.

I had ſuch a fancy. (*aſide*) What can I think of her?

Mrs. Bellmour.

You are much miſtaken. In theſe caſes friends may interpoſe, but what can they do? They recommend a wife to the good will, the honour, and generoſity of her huſband. But when a woman, who ſhould be eſteemed and loved, is recommended as an object of compaſſion, ſhe is humbled indeed: it is all over with her. A wife ſhould recommend herſelf by the graces of her perſon, and the variety of her talents. Men will prove falſe, and if there is nothing in your complaint but mere gallantry on his ſide, I proteſt I do not ſee that your caſe is ſo very bad.

Mrs. Lovemore.

Can it be worſe, Ma'am?

Mrs. Bellmour.

A great deal.—If his affections, inſtead of being alienated, had been extinguiſhed, what would be the conſequence?—A downright, ſullen, habitual inſenſibility. From that lethargy of affection a man is not eaſily recalled. In all Love's bill of mortality there is not a more fatal diſorder. But this is not the caſe with Mr. Lovemore: by your account, he ſtill has ſentiment; and where there is ſentiment, there is room to hope for an alteration.—But where the heart has loſt it's feeling, you have the pain of finding yourſelf neglected; and for what? The man is grown ſtupid, and to the warm beams of wit and beauty, as impenetrable as an ice-houſe.

Mrs.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

That is not my complaint. I have to do with one, who is too ſuſceptible of impreſſions from every beautiful object that comes in his way.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Why, ſo much the better. A new idea ſtrikes his fancy. He is inconſtant, but after wavering and fluttering, he may ſettle at laſt.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

How light ſhe makes of it! She apologizes for him! (*aſide*)

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

And perhaps, the fault is on the woman's ſide.—

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

The virtue of my conduct, Madam—

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Oh! I would have laid my life you would be at that work. But virtue is not the queſtion at preſent. I ſuppoſe virtue; that is always underſtood. The fault I mean, is the want of due attention to the art of pleaſing. It is there that moſt women fail. In theſe times, virtue alone may be its own reward.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

But after being married ſo long, and behaving all the time with ſuch an equality—

Mrs. Bellmour.

Ay, that equality is the rock ſo many ſplit upon. The men will change; they love variety. Excuſe my freedom. Do you know your rival?

Mrs. Lovemore.

There I own I am ſomewhat puzzled.

Mrs. Bellmour.

Never throw up the cards for all that. Take my advice, Ma'am.—Employ but half the pains you now uſe perhaps in teazing yourſelf, to vie with the perſon who has ſtruck your huſband's fancy,—to vie with her, I ſay, in the arts of pleaſing; do this, and victory is your's. If I judge right, you have qualities that may diſpute his heart with any body.

Mrs. Lovemore.

You are pleaſed to compliment.

Mrs. Bellmour.

Oh! by no means; but you muſt exert yourſelf. It is the wife's buſineſs to bait the hook for her huſband with variety. Virtue alone will not do it. Vice puts on allurements: why ſhould not truth and innocence do the ſame? That is the whole affair, Ma'am: I would not make myſelf uneaſy.

Mrs. Lovemore.

Not uneaſy, when a wild, ungrateful libertine—

Mrs. Bellmour.

Give me leave. I have been married, and am a little

little in the ſecret.—To win a heart is eaſy; to keep it the difficulty. After the fatal words "for better, "for worſe," women in general relax into indolence, and while they are guilty of no infidelity, they think every thing is right. But they are miſtaken: a great deal is wanting; an addreſs, vivacity, a deſire to pleaſe.—A favourite poet,—Prior he expreſſed it with delicacy:

Above the fix'd and ſettled rules
Of vice and virtue in the ſchools,
The better part ſhould ſet before 'em
A grace, a manner, a decorum.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

But when the natural temper——

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Oh! the natural temper muſt be forced. Home muſt be made a place of pleaſure to the huſband. How is that to be done? Virtue of itſelf will not pleaſe the taſte of this age; and that equality, which you talk of, is a ſameneſs that palls and wearies. A wife ſhould throw infinite variety into her manner. She ſhould, as it were, multiply herſelf, and ſhew a number of different women collected in her own perſon. The grave, the gay, the tender, affectionate, witty, ſilent, and talkative, all in their turns, all ſhifting the ſcene, and ſhe ſucceeding to herſelf as quick as lightening. And this I take to be the whole myſtery; the way to keep a man.—But I beg your pardon. I go on too faſt: you will think me the giddieſt creature.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Quite the reverſe, Ma'am; you are ſo obliging.—*(aſide)* Sir Brilliant has told me truth, I believe.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

I have tired myſelf and you too.—But pray, may I now enquire, who was ſo kind as to intimate that I am acquainted with Mr. Lovemore?

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

It was a mere miſtake. I have given you a great deal of trouble. You will excuſe my frankneſs; I had heard that his viſits were frequent here.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

His viſits frequent here! My Lady Conſtant could not tell you ſo?

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

She told me quite the contrary. She knows your amiable qualities, and does you juſtice.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

The accident is lucky: it has procured me the honour of your acquaintance. And I ſuppoſe you imagined that I had robbed you of Mr. Lovemore's heart?—Scandal will be buzzing about. I can laugh at every thing of that ſort. (*a rap at the door*) Oh! Heavens! ſome troubleſome viſit.—

(*rings a bell*)

Enter

Enter MIGNIONET.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

I am not at home. Go, and give an anſwer.

MIGNIONET.

It is Lord Etheridge, Ma'am: he is coming up ſtairs. The ſervants did not know you had changed your mind.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Was ever any thing ſo croſs? Tell his Lordſhip I have company; I am buſy; I am not well; any thing, don't let him come in. Make haſte, diſpatch: I won't ſee him.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

I beg I may not hinder you: I ſhall take my leave.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

By no means. Our converſation grows intereſting. I poſitively will not ſee my Lord.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

I can't agree to that. You muſt ſee his Lordſhip. I can ſtep into another room.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Will you be ſo good?—You will find ſomething to amuſe you in that cabinet. *(points to a door in the back ſcene)* We muſt talk further. My Lord ſhan't ſtay long.

Mrs. Lovemore.

Nay, but if you ſtand upon ceremony——

Mrs. Bellmour.

Very well: I'll contrive it. This is a lover of mine. A lover and a huſband are the ſame thing. Perhaps it will divert you to hear how I manage him. I hear him on the ſtairs. Make haſte: Mignionet ſhew the way. (*Mrs. Lovemore and Mignionet go out at the back ſcene*)

Mrs. Bellmour.

Let me ſee how I look to receive him.

(*runs to her glaſs*)

Enter Lovemore, *with a Star and Garter, as* Lord Etheridge.

Lovemore.

A heav'nly image in the glaſs appears,
To that ſhe bends, to that her eyes ſhe rears,
Repairs her ſmiles——

Mrs. Bellmour.

Repairs her ſmiles, my Lord! You are ſatirical this morning. Pray, my Lord, are my features out of repair, like an old houſe in the country, that wants a tenant?

Lovemore.

Nay, now you wreſt the words from their viſible intention. You can't ſuppoſe that I impute to ſuch perfect beauty the leaſt want of repair, whatever may

may be the caſe, Ma'am, with regard to the want of a tenant.

Mrs. Bellmour.

Oh! then your opinion is, that I want a tenant. And perhaps you think I am going to put up a bill to ſignify to all paſſers-by, that here is a manſion to be let, enquire of the widow Blackacre. I like your notion; I don't think it would be a bad ſcheme. Shall I try it?

Lovemore.

A palace needs no ſuch invitation. It's natural beauty attracts admiring eyes. But who can bid up to the price? The perſon who is able to do it—

Mrs. Bellmour.

Will be happy; I know that is what you are going to ſay. But he muſt do homage for it; and then I will let it to none but a ſingle gentleman. Do you know any body, whom thoſe conditions will ſuit?

Lovemore.

Thoſe conditions, Ma'am——(*aſide*) What the devil does ſhe mean? I am not detected, I hope. ——To be ſure, Ma'am, thoſe conditions—And—none but ſingle gentlemen will preſume to——

Mrs. Bellmour.

And then it muſt be a leaſe for life. But that will never do. Nobody will be troubled with it. I ſhall never get it off my hands: do you think I ſhall, my Lord?

Love-

LOVEMORE.

There muſt be very little taſte left, if you have not a number of bidders. You know the ambition of my heart; you know I am devoted to you, upon any terms, even though it were to be bought with life.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Heavens! what a dying ſwain you are! And does your Lordſhip mean to be guilty of matrimony? Lord! what a queſtion have I aſked? To be ſure I am the giddieſt creature. My Lord, don't you think me a ſtrange madcap?

LOVEMORE.

A vein of wit, like your's, that ſprings at once from vivacity and ſentiment, ſerves to exalt your beauty, and give animation to every charm.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Upon my word, you have ſaid it finely!—But you are in the right, my Lord. Your penſive, melancholy beauty is the moſt inſipid thing in nature. And yet we often ſee features without a mind; and the owner of them ſits in the room with you, like a mere vegetable, for an hour together, till at laſt ſhe is incited to the violent exertion of, "Yes, Sir"——"I fancy not, Ma'am," and then a matter of fact converſation! "Miſs Beverley is going to "be married to Captain Shoulder-Knot—My Lord "Mortgage has had another tumble at Hazard—"Sir Harry Wilding has loſt his election—They ſay "ſhort-aprons are coming into faſhion."

LOVE-

LOVEMORE.

Oh! a matter of fact converſation is inſupportable.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

But you meet with nothing elſe. All in great ſpirits about nothing, and not an idea among them. Go to Ranelagh, or to what public place you will, it is juſt the ſame. A lady comes up to you; "How charmingly you look!---But my dear M'em, did you hear what happened to us the other night?---We were going home from the Opera---you know my aunt Roly-Poly; it was her coach. There was ſhe and Lady Betty Fidget---What a ſweet blonde! How do you do, my dear? (*curtſying as to another going by*) My Lady Betty is quite recovered; we were all frightened about her; but Doctor Snake-root was called in; no, not Doctor Snake-root, Doctor Bolus; and ſo he altered the courſe of the medicines, and ſo my Lady Betty is purely now.—Well, there was ſhe, and my aunt, and Sir George Bragwell—a pretty man Sir George—fineſt teeth in the world—Your Ladyſhip's moſt obedient—(*curtſying*) We expected you laſt night, but you did not come.—He! he! he!—And ſo there was Sir George and the reſt of us; and ſo turning the corner of Bond-ſtreet, the brute of a coachman—I humbly thank your Grace (*curtſys*)---the brute of a coachman overturned us, and ſo my aunt Roly-Poly was frighted out of her wits; and Lady Betty has had her nerves again. Only think! ſuch accidents!---I am glad to ſee you look ſo well; a l'honneur; he! he! he!"

LOVE-

LOVEMORE.

Ho! ho! you paint to the life. I ſee her moving before me in all her airs.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

With this converſation their whole ſtock is exhauſted, and away they run to cards. Quadrille has murdered wit!

LOVEMORE.

Ay, and beauty too. Cards are the worſt enemies to a complection: the ſmall-pox is not ſo bad. The paſſions throw themſelves into every feature: I have ſeen the countenance of an angel changed, in a moment, to abſolute deformity: the little loves and graces, that ſparkled in the eye, bloomed in the cheek, and ſmiled about the mouth, all wing their flight, and leave the face, which they before adorned, a prey to grief, to anger, malice, and fury, and the whole train of fretful paſſions.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

And the language of the paſſions is ſometimes heard upon thoſe occaſions.

LOVEMORE.

Very true, Ma'am; and if by chance they do bridle and hold in a little, the ſtruggle they undergo is the moſt ridiculous ſight in nature. I have ſeen a huge oath quivering on the pale lip of a reigning toaſt for half an hour together, and an uplifted eye accuſing the gods for the loſs of an odd trick. And then, at laſt, the whole room is a babel of ſounds. "My Lord, you flung away the game.—Sir George, why

" why did not you rough the ſpade?---Captain Ha-
" zard, why did not you lead through the honour?
" ---Ma'am it was not the play---pardon me Sir---
" but ma'am,---but Sir---I would not play with you
" for ſtraws; don't you know what Hoyle ſays?---
" If A and B are partners againſt C and D, and
" the game nine all, A and B have won three tricks,
" and C and D four tricks; C leads his ſuit, D
" puts up the King, then returns the ſuit; A paſſes,
" C puts up the queen, and B trumps it; and ſo
" A and B and C and D are bandied about;" they attack, they defend, and all is jargon, and confuſion, wrangling, noiſe, and nonſenſe; and high life, and polite converſation.——Ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. Bellmour.

Ho! ho! the pencil of Hogarth could not do it better. And yet one is dragged to theſe places. One muſt play ſometimes. We muſt let our friends pick our pockets now and then, or they drop our acquaintance. Do you ever play, my Lord?

Lovemore.

Play, Ma'am?—*(aſide)* What does ſhe mean? I muſt play the hypocrite to the end of the chapter. —Play?—Now and then, as you ſay one muſt; to oblige, and from neceſſity; but from taſte, or inclination, no; I never touch a card.

Mrs. Bellmour.

Oh! very true; I forgot. You dedicate your time to the Muſes; a downright rhyming Peer. Do you know, my Lord, that I am charmed with your ſong?

Love-

LOVEMORE.

Are you?

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Abſolutely; and I really think you would make an admirable Vauxhall poet.

LOVEMORE.

Nay, now you flatter me.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

No, as I live; it is very pretty. And do you know that I can ſing it already? Come, you ſhall hear how I murder it. I have no voice to-day, but you ſhall hear me. (*Sings.*)

I.

Attend all ye fair, and I'll tell you the art
To bind ev'ry fancy with eaſe in your chains;
To hold in ſoft fetters the conjugal heart,
And baniſh from HYMEN *his doubts and his pains.*

II.

When Juno was deck'd with the Ceſtus of Love,
At firſt ſhe was handſome; ſhe charming became:
With ſkill the ſoft paſſions it taught her to move,
To kindle at once, and to keep up the flame.

III.

'Tis this gives the eyes all their magic and fire,
The voice melting accents; impaſſions the kiſs;
Confers the ſweet ſmile, that awakens deſire,
And plants round the fair each incentive to bliſs.

Thence

IV.

Thence flows the gay chat, more than reaſon that charms;
The eloquent bluſh, that can beauty improve;
The fond ſigh, the fond vow; the ſoft touch that alarms;
The tender diſdain, the renewal of love.

V.

Ye fair, take the Ceſtus, and practice it's pow'r:
The mind unaccompliſh'd, mere features are vain;
With wit, with good humour enliven each hour,
And the loves, and the graces ſhall walk in your train.

LOVEMORE.

My poetry is infinitely obliged to you. It grows into ſenſe, as you ſing it. Your voice, like the Ceſtus of Venus, beſtows a grace upon every thing.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Oh! fulſome! I ſing horridly. (*goes to the glaſs*) How do I look?—Don't tell me, my Lord; you are ſtudying a compliment, but I am reſolved to mortify you; I won't hear it.—Well! have you thought of any thing? Let it paſs; it's too late now. Pray, my Lord, how came you to chooſe ſo grave a ſubject as connubial happineſs?

LOVEMORE.

Cloſe and particular that queſtion! (*aſide*)

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Juno! Hymen! doubts and pains! one would almoſt ſwear that you have a wife at home, who ſat for the picture.

LOVE-

LOVEMORE.

Ma'am, the—(*embarraſſed*) The compliment—you are only laughing at me—the ſubject, from every day's experience——(*aſide*) Does ſhe ſuſpect me? ——the ſubject is common—Batchelors wives, you know——ha! ha!——And when you inſpire the thought; when you are the bright original, it is no wonder that the copy——

MRS. BELLMOUR.

Horrid! going to harp on the old ſtring. Odious ſollicitations! I hate all propoſals. I am not in the humour. You muſt releaſe me now: your viſit is rather long. I have indulged you a great while. And beſides, were I to liſten to your vows, what would become of poor Sir Brilliant Faſhion?

LOVEMORE.

Sir Brilliant Faſhion?

MRS. BELLMOUR.

Do you know him?

LOVEMORE.

I know whom you mean. I have ſeen him; but that's all. He lives with a ſtrange ſet, and does not move in my ſphere. If he is a friend of your's, I have no more to ſay.

MRS. BELLMOUR.

Is there any thing to ſay againſt him?

LOVE-

LOVEMORE.

Nay, I have no knowledge of the gentleman. They who know him beſt, don't rate him high. A ſort of current coin that paſſes in this town. You will do well to beware of counterfeits.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

But this is very alarming——

Enter MIGNIONET, *in a violent hurry.*

MIGNIONET.

My dear madam, I am frighted out of my ſenſes. The poor Lady—where are the heartſhorn drops?

LOVEMORE.

The lady! what lady?

MIGNIONET.

Never ſtand aſking what lady. She has fainted away all on a ſudden: ſhe is now in ſtrong hyſtericks; give me the drops.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

I muſt run to her aſſiſtance. Adieu, my Lord. I ſhall be at home in the evening. Mignionet, ſtep this way. Your Lordſhip will excuſe me: I ſhall expect to ſee you. Come, Mignionet; make haſte; make haſte. [*Exit with Mignionet.*

LOVEMORE.

I hope the lady has not overheard me. What a villain am I to carry on this ſcheme againſt ſo much beauty, innocence, and merit? And to wear this

badge of honour for the darkeſt purpoſes? And then my friend Sir Brilliant, will it be fair to ſupplant him?---Prithee, be quiet, my dear conſcience! none of your meddling; don't interrupt a gentleman in his pleaſures. Don't you know, my good friend, that love has no reſpect for perſons, but ſoars above all laws of honour and of friendſhip? No reflection; have her I muſt, and that quickly too, or ſhe will diſcover all. Beſides, this is my wife's fault: why does not ſhe make home agreeable? I am willing to be happy; I could be conſtant to her, but ſhe is not formed for happineſs. What the devil is madam Fortune about now?—(*Sir Brilliant ſings within*) Sir Brilliant, by all that's infamous. Confuſion! no place to hide me? no eſcape? The door is locked. Mignionet, Mignionet, open the door.

MIGNIONET. (*within*)

You muſt not come in here.

LOVEMORE.

What ſhall I do? This ſtar, and this ribbon will bring me to diſgrace. Away with this tell-tale evidence. (*Takes off the ribbon*) Go, thou bluſhing devil, and hide thyſelf for ever. (*Puts it in his pocket*)

Enter SIR BRILLIANT, *ſinging*.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Mrs. Bellmour, I have ſuch a ſtory for you.---How!---Lovemore?

LOVEMORE.

Your ſlave, Sir Brilliant, your ſlave. (*hiding the ſtar with his hat*)

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

I did not think you had been acquainted here.

LOVEMORE.

You are right. I came in queſt of you. I ſaw the lady. I was drawn hither by mere curioſity. We have had ſome converſation; and I made it ſubſervient to your purpoſes. I have been giving a great character of you.

SIR BRILLIANT.

You are allways at the ſervice of your friends. But what's the matter? what are you fumbling about? (*pulls the hat*)

LOVEMORE.

'Sdeath! have care: don't touch me. (*puts his handkerchief to his breaſt*)

SIR BRILLIANT.

What the devil ails you?

LOVEMORE.

Oh! keep off—(*aſide*) Here's a buſineſs.—Taken in the old way: let me paſs.—I have had a fling at Lord Etheridge: he will be out of favour with the widow: I have done you that good.—Racks and torments, my old complaint! (*wanting to paſs him*)

SIR BRILLIANT.

What complaint? You had better ſit down.

LOVEMORE.

No, no; air, the air. I muſt have a ſurgeon. A ſtroke of a tennis ball! My Lord Rackett's unlucky left hand. Let me paſs. There is ſomething forming here. (*paſſes him*) To be caught is the devil. (*aſide*)—Don't mention my name. You will counteract all I have ſaid.——Oh! torture, torture!——I will explain to you another time. Sir Brilliant, your's. I have ſerved your intereſt.——Oh! there is certainly ſomething forming. [*Exit.*

SIR BRILLIANT.

What does all this mean?—So, ſo, Mrs. Lovemore's ſuſpicions are well founded.—The widow has her private viſits, I ſee. Yes, yes, there is ſomething forming here.

Enter Mrs. BELLMOUR.

SIR BRILLIANT.

So; here ſhe comes. The whole ſhall be explained. I hope, ma'am, that I don't interrupt you with any piquet-friend.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

You are allways a torment: what brings, you hither?

SIR BRILLIANT.

There are times, ma'am, when a viſit——

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Is unſeaſonable, and your's is ſo now. How can you teaze me?

SIR

SIR BRILLIANT.

I thought as much.—There are ſome things that may require to be diſcuſſed between us.

MRS. BELLMOUR.

Reſerve them all for another time. I can't hear you now. You muſt leave me. There is a lady taken ill in the next room.

SIR BRILLIANT.

And here has been a gentleman taken ill in this room.

MRS. BELLMOUR.

How troubleſome! you muſt begone. Do you diſpute my will and pleaſure?—Fly this moment.

SIR BRILLIANT.

But ma'am—Nay, if you inſiſt upon it——(*goes*)

MRS. BELLMOUR.

But, Sir!—I will be abſolute: you muſt leave me. (*puts him out*) There, and now I'll make ſure of the door.

Enter MRS. LOVEMORE, *leaning on* MIGNIONET.

MIGNIONET.

This way, madam: here is more air in this room.

MRS. BELLMOUR.

How do you find yourſelf? Pray ſit down.

Mrs. Lovemore.

My ſpirits were too weak. I could not ſupport it any longer. Such a ſcene of perfidy!

Mrs. Bellmour.

You aſtoniſh me: what perfidy?

Mrs. Lovemore.

Perfidy of the blackeſt dye! I told you that you were acquainted with my huſband?

Mrs Bellmour.

Acquainted with your huſband! (*angrily*)

Mrs. Lovemore.

A moment's patience.—Yes, madam, you are acquainted with him.—The baſe man, who went hence but now——

Mrs. Bellmour.

Sir Brilliant Faſhion?

Mrs. Lovemore.

No; your Lord Etheridge, as he calls himſelf——

Mrs. Bellmour.

Lord Etheridge? What of him pray?

Lovemore.

Falſe, diſſembling man! he is my huſband, ma'am: not Lord Etheridge, but plain Mr. Lovemore; my Mr. Lovemore.

Mrs.

Mrs. Bellmour.

And has he been baſe enough to aſſume a title to enſnare me to my undoing?

Mignionet. (*going*)

Well, for certain I believe the devil's in me: I always thought him a ſly one. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Lovemore.

To ſee him carrying on this dark deſign,—to ſee the man, whom I have ever eſteemed and loved,—the man whom I muſt ſtill love,—eſteem him, I fear, I never can,—to ſee him before my face, with that artful treachery! it was too much for ſenſibility like mine; I felt the ſhock too ſeverely, and I ſunk under it.

Mrs. Bellmour.

I am ready to ſink this moment with amazement. I ſaw him, for the firſt time, at old Mrs. Loveit's. She introduced him to me. The appointment was of her own making.

Mrs. Lovemore.

You know Mrs. Loveit's character, I ſuppoſe.

Mrs. Bellmour.

The practiſed veteran!——Could I ſuſpect that a woman, in her ſtile of life, would lend herſelf to a vile ſtratagem againſt my honour? That ſhe would join in a conſpiracy againſt her own ſex?—Mr. Lovemore, ſhall never enter theſe doors again.---I am obliged to you, ma'am, for this viſit; to me a providential incident. I am ſorry for your ſhare in it. The diſcovery ſecures my peace and happineſs;

to you, it is a fatal conviction, a proof unanſwerable againſt the perſon to whom you are joined for life.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

After this diſcovery, it cannot be for life. I am reſolved not to paſs another day under his roof.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Hold, hold; no ſudden reſolutions. Conſider a little: paſſion is a bad adviſer. This may take a turn to your advantage.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

That can never be: I am loſt beyond redemption.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Don't decide too raſhly. Come, come, the man, who has certain qualities, is worth thinking about, before one throws the hideous thing away for ever. Mr. Lovemore is a traitor; but is not he ſtill amiable? And beſides, you have heard his ſentiments. That ſong points at ſomething. Perhaps you are a little to blame. He did not write upon ſuch a ſubject, without a cauſe to ſuggeſt it. We will talk over this matter cooly. You have ſaved me, and I muſt return the obligation. You ſhall ſtay dinner with me.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Excuſe me. Mr. Lovemore may poſſibly go home. He ſhall hear of his guilt, while the ſenſe of it pierces here, and wounds me to the quick.

Mrs.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Now there you are wrong: take my advice firſt. I will lay ſuch a plan, as may enſure him your's for ever. Come, come, you muſt not leave me yet. (*takes her hand*) Anſwer me one queſtion: don't you ſtill think he has qualities, that do in ſome ſort apologize for his vices?

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

I don't know what to think of it: I hope he has.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Very well then. I have loſt a lover; you may gain one. Your conduct upon this occaſion may reform him; and let me tell you that the man, who has it in his power to atone for his faults, ſhould not be entirely deſpiſed.——Let the wife exert herſelf; let her try her powers of pleaſing, and take my word for it,

The wild gallant no more abroad will roam,
But find his lov'd variety at home.

End of the THIRD ACT.

ACT

ACT the FOURTH.

Scene, an Apartment in LOVEMORE'S *Houſe.*

Mr. *and* Mrs. LOVEMORE, *at table, after dinner; Servants taking things out of the room.*

LOVEMORE. (*filling a glaſs*)

I Wonder you are not tired of the ſame eternal topick. (*ſipping his wine*)

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

If I make it an eternal topick, it is for your own good, Mr. Lovemore.

LOVEMORE.

I know I have your good wiſhes, and you have mine. All our abſent friends, Mrs. Lovemore. (*drinks*)

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

If you would but wiſh well to yourſelf, Sir, I ſhould be happy.—But in the way you go on, your health muſt be ruined; day is night, and night day; your ſubſtance ſquandered; your conſtitution deſtroyed; and your family quite neglected.

LOVEMORE.

Family neglected! you ſee I dined at home, and this is my reward for it.

Mrs.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

You dined at home, Sir, becauſe ſomething abroad has diſconcerted you. You went, I ſuppoſe, after I ſaw you at Lady Conſtant's, to your old haunt, your friend Mrs. Loveit——

LOVEMORE.

Mrs. Loveit! ha! ha! I dropt her acquaintance long ago. No, my love, I drove into the city, and ſpent the reſt of the morning upon buſineſs. I had long accounts to ſettle with old Diſcount the banker.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

And that to be ſure engroſſed all your time. Buſineſs muſt be minded. Did you find him at home?

LOVEMORE.

It was by his own appointment. I went to his houſe directly after I parted from you. I have been no where elſe. Matters of account always fatigue me.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

I would not be too inquiſitive, Sir.

LOVEMORE.

Oh! no; you never are. I ſtaid at the banker's the reſt of the time; and I came ſtraight from his houſe to have the pleaſure of dining with you.

(fills a glaſs of wine)

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Were there any ſincerity in that declaration, I ſhould

ſhould be happy. A tavern life has hitherto been your delight. I wonder what delight you can find in ſuch an eternal round of gaming, riot and diſſipation. Will you anſwer me one queſtion?

LOVEMORE.

With great pleaſure,—*(aſide)* if it is not inconvenient.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Lay your hand on your heart, and tell me,—— Have I deſerved this uſage?

LOVEMORE.

My humble ſervice to you, my love. *(drinks)*

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

I am ſure I have never been deficient in any one point of the duty I owe you. You won my heart, and I gave it freely.

LOVEMORE. *(going to ſleep)*

It is very true.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Your intereſt has been mine. I have known no pleaſure unconnected with your happineſs. Diverſions, ſhew, and pomp, have had no allurements for me.

LOVEMORE. *(dropping aſleep)*

Yes,—you are right—juſt as you pleaſe——

Mrs.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Had I been inclined to follow the example of other women, your fortune would have felt it before now. You might have been thouſands out of pocket; but your intereſt has been the object of my attention; and your convenience——

LOVEMORE. (*turns his chair from her*)

You reaſon very——you reaſon admir—ably——admi—rably——allways——all—allways——gay——and——enter—entertaining——(*going to ſleep*)

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Marriage is generally conſidered as an introduction to the great ſcene of the world. I thought it a retreat to leſs noiſy and ſerener pleaſures. What is called polite company (*he falls faſt aſleep*) was not my taſte. You was laviſh in expence; I was therefore an œconomiſt. From the moment marriage made me your's, the pleaſure ariſing from your company——There! faſt aſleep! Agreeable company indeed!——This is ever his way. (*ſhe riſes*) Unfeeling man!——It is too plain that I am grown his averſion. Mr. Lovemore! (*looking at him*) you little think what a ſcene this day has brought to light. And yet he hopes with falſehood to varniſh and diſguiſe his treachery. How mean the ſubterfuge! Shall I rouze him now, and tax him with his guilt? My heart is too full, and reproach will only tend to exaſperate, and perhaps make him irreconcileable. The pride, that can ſtoop to low and wretched artifice, but ill can brook detection. Let him reſt for the preſent. The widow Bellmour's experiment

periment may anſwer better.---I will try it at leaſt. -- Oh! Mr. Lovemore, you will break my heart.

[*Looks at him, and Exit.*

LOVEMORE. *(talking in his ſleep)*

I do liſten---I am not aſleep. *(ſleeps and nods)* You are very right;---always right---I am only thinking a little. No---no---no---(*mutters indiſtinctly*) It was not two o'clock---in bed---in bed by twelve——Sir Baſhfull is an oaf---The widow Bellmour---(*ſleeps, and his head rolls about*) What's the matter? (*waking*) I beg your pardon; I was beginning to nod. What did you ſay, my dear? (*leans on the table, without looking about*) One cannot always you know---(*turns about*) 'Sdeath! ſhe is gone! Oh! faſt aſleep. This is ever the way, when one dines at home. Let me ſhake it off. (*riſes*) What's o'clock?---No amuſement in this houſe; what ſhall I do? The Widow?---I muſt not venture in that quarter. My evil genius Sir Brilliant will be buſy there. Is any body in the way? I muſt ſally out. My dear Venus, favour your votary this afternoon:

—— Your beſt arms employ,
All wing'd with pleaſure, and all tipt with joy.

[*Exit.*

Scene changes to SIR BASHFULL'S.

Enter LADY CONSTANT *and* FURNISH.

LADY CONSTANT.

Who brought this letter?

FUR-

FURNISH.

A ſervant of Mrs. Lovemore's: he waits an anſwer.

LADY CONSTANT.

My compliments to Mrs. Lovemore, and I ſhall wait upon her.

FURNISH.

Yes, Ma'am. (*going*)

LADY CONSTANT.

And hark ye, Furniſh;---have the things been carried to Sir Brilliant, as I ordered?

FURNISH.

I have obeyed your Ladyſhip's commands. The ſteward went himſelf. Mr. Pounce, your Ladyſhip knows, is a truſty body. You may depend upon his care.

LADY CONSTANT.

Go and ſend Mrs. Lovemore her anſwer. She may depend upon my being with her in time.

[*Exit* Furniſh.

LADY CONSTANT, *alone.*

What can Mrs. Lovemore want? (*reads*) "*Ladyſhip's company to a card-party: but cards are the leaſt part of my object. I have ſomething of higher moment in view, and the preſence of my friends is abſolutely neceſſary.*" There is ſome myſtery in all this. What does ſhe mean? I ſhall go, and then the ſcene will clear up: Thoſe diamond buckles em-

embarrafs me more than Mrs. Lovemore's unintelligible letter. Diamond buckles to me! From what quarter? Who could fend them? Nobody but Sir Brilliant. I am right in my concluſion: they came from him. Who could take the liberty but a perſon of his caſt? A preſuming man! But I have mortified his vanity. Before this time, he has found his diamonds thrown back upon his hands, with the diſdain which ſuch confidence deſerves.---But if I have made a miſtake!---Oh! no; no danger. Has not Sir Brilliant made overtures to me? Has not he declared himſelf? He ſees Sir Baſhfull's behaviour, and his vanity plumes itſelf upon that circumſtance. To give me my revenge againſt a crazy and inſufferable huſband, he would fain induce me to ruin myſelf with a coxcomb. Beſides; he heard the whole of Sir Baſhfull's diſpute about diamonds and trinkets: the thing is clear; it was Sir Brilliant ſent them; and by that ſtratagem he hopes to bribe me into compliance.---That bait will never take; though here comes one, who, I am ſure, deſerves to be treated without a grain of ceremony.

Enter SIR BASHFULL.

SIR BASHFULL.

Here ſhe is. Now let me ſee whether ſhe will take any notice of the preſent I ſent her. She has reaſon to be in good humour, I think.---Your ſervant, Madam.

LADY CONSTANT.

Your addreſs is polite, Sir.

SIR

SIR BASHFULL. *(aſide)*

Still proud and obſtinate!---Has any thing happened to diſturb the harmony of your temper?

LADY CONSTANT.

Conſidering what little diſcord you make, it is a wonder that my temper is not always in tune.

SIR BASHFULL.

If you never gave me cauſe, Madam——

LADY CONSTANT.

Oh! for mercy ſake, truce with altercation. I am tired out with the eternal violence of your temper. Thoſe frequent ſtarts of paſſion hurry me out of my ſenſes: and thoſe unaccountable whims, that hold ſuch conſtant poſſeſſion of you——

SIR BASHFULL.

Whims, Madam?---Not to comply with you in every thing is a whim, truly. Muſt I yield to the exorbitant demands of your extravagance? When you laid cloſe ſiege to me for diamond bawbles, and I know not what, was that a whim of mine? Did I take that fancy into my head, without cauſe, and without ſufficient foundation?

LADY CONSTANT.

Well, we have exhauſted the ſubject. Have not you told me a thouſand times that there is no living with me? I agree to it. And have not I returned the compliment? We have nothing new to ſay; and now, all that remains, is to let the lawyer reduce to writing our mutual opinions, and ſo we may

part with the pleaſure of giving each other a moſt woefull character.

SIR BASHFULL. (*aſide*)

The buckles have had no effect. Stubborn! ſhe has received them, and won't own it.

LADY CONSTANT.

A daſh of your pen, Sir, at the foot of certain articles now preparing, will make us both eaſy. (*going*)

SIR BASHFULL.

If we don't live happily, it is your own fault.

LADY CONSTANT.

That is very old.

SIR BASHFULL.

If you would controul your paſſion for play ——

LADY CONSTANT.

Quite threadbare!

SIR BASHFULL.

I have ſtill a regard for you.

LADY CONSTANT.

Worn-out to frippery!---I can't hear any more. The law will dreſs it up in new language for us, and that will end our differences.

[*Exit.*

SIR BASHFULL. (*alone*)

I muſt unburthen my heart: there is no time to be

be loſt. I love her; I admire her; ſhe inflames my tendereſt paſſions, and raiſes ſuch a conflict here in my very heart, I cannot any longer conceal the ſecret from her. I'll go and tell her all this moment. ---But then that meddling fiend, her maid, will be there: Po! I can turn her out of the room: but then the jade will ſuſpect ſomething.---Her Ladyſhip may be alone: I'll ſend to know where ſhe is. Who is there? Sideboard——

Enter SIDEBOARD.

SIR BASHFULL.

Go and tell your lady that——(*pauſes*)

SIDEBOARD.

Did your Honour want me?

SIR BASHFULL.

No matter; it does not ſignify.—(*aſide*) I ſhall never be able to tell her my mind: a glance of her eye, and my own confuſion will undo all.

SIDEBOARD.

I thought your Honour called.

SIR BASHFULL. (*aſide*)

A thought comes acroſs me: I'll write her a letter. Yes, yes, a letter will do the buſineſs. Sideboard, draw that table this way—Reach me a chair.

SIDEBOARD.

There your Honour.

SIR BASHFULL.

Do you ſtay while I write a letter. You ſhall carry it for me. (*ſits down to write.*)

SIDEBOARD.

Yes, Sir. I hope he has an intrigue upon his hands. A ſervant thrives under a maſter that has his private amuſements. Love on, ſay I, if you are ſo given: it will bring griſt to my mill.

SIR BASHFULL. (*writing*)

This will ſurpriſe her. Warm, paſſionate, an tender! and yet it does not come up to what I fe e

SIDEBOARD.

What is he at?---I may as well read the newspaper. (*takes it out of his pocket*) What in the name of wonder is all this?---Ha! ha! (*burſts into a loud laugh*) I never heard the like of this before. Oh! ho! ho! ho!

SIR BASHFULL.

What does the ſcoundrel mean? (*ſtares at him*)

SIDEBOARD.

Ha! ha! ha! I can't help laughing.

SIR BASHFULL.

Does the villain ſuſpect me? (*riſes*) Hark ye, ſirrah, if ever I find that you dare liſten at any door in my houſe——

SIDEBOARD.

Sir!

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

Confeſs the truth: have not you been liſtening to my converſation with Mr. Lovemore this morning?

SIDEBOARD.

Who I, Sir? I would not be guilty of ſuch a thing: I never did the like in all my days.

SIR BASHFULL.

What was you laughing at?

SIDEBOARD.

A fooliſh thing in the newſpaper, Sir, that's all. I'll read it to your Honour. (*reads*) We hear that a new comedy is now in rehearſal, and will ſpeedily be performed, intitled, *The Amorous Huſband, or the Man in Love with his own Wife.*

SIR BASHFULL.

And what do you ſee to laugh at?

SIDEBOARD.

See, Sir? I have lived in a great many families, and never heard of the like before.

SIR BASHFULL. (*aſide*)

There, there, there!—I ſhall be the butt of my own ſervants.—Sirrah, leave the room. And let me never hear that you have the trick of liſtening in my houſe.

SIDEBOARD.

No, Sir.—The Man in Love with his own Wife!

[*Exit laughing.*

SIR BASHFULL.

What does the varlet mean?—No matter—I have finiſhed my letter, and it ſhall be ſent this moment. ——But then, if I ſhould get into a comedy? Po! no more ſcruples. I'll ſeal it directly—Sideboard—

Enter SIDEBOARD.

SIR BASHFULL. (*ſealing the letter*)

I have opened my heart to her. What do you bring your hat and ſtick for?

SIDEBOARD.

To go out with your Honour's letter.

SIR BASHFULL.

You have not far to go. Take this, and let nobody ſee you.

SIDEBOARD.

I warrant me, your Honour. [*Exit.*

SIR BASHFULL.

I feel much lighter now. A load is taken off my heart.

Enter SIDEBOARD.

SIR BASHFULL.

What do you come back for?

SIDEBOARD.

A word or two by way of direction, if you pleaſe,

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

Blockhead! give it to me—(*aſide*) If I direct it, he finds me out.—Go about your buſineſs: I have no occaſion for you; leave the room.

SIDEBOARD.

Very well, Sir.—Does he think to manage his own intrigues? If he takes my commiſſion out of my hands, I ſhall give him warning. The vices of our maſters are all the vails a poor ſervant has left.

[*Exit.*

SIR BASHFULL.

What muſt be done?—Mr. Lovemore could conduct this buſineſs for me. He is a man of addreſs, and knows all the approaches to a woman's heart. That fellow, Sideboard, coming again?—No, no; this is lucky. Mr. Lovemore, I am glad to ſee you.

Enter LOVEMORE.

LOVEMORE.

A ſecond viſit you ſee, in one day; entirely on the ſcore of friendſhip.

SIR BASHFULL.

And I thank you for it; heartily thank you.

LOVEMORE.

I broke away from company at the St. Alban's on purpoſe to attend you. Well, I have made your Lady eaſier in her mind, have not I?

SIR BASHFULL.

We don't hit it at all, Mr. Lovemore.

LOVEMORE.

No?

SIR BASHFULL.

I think ſhe has been rather worſe, ſince you ſpoke to her.

LOVEMORE.

A good ſymptom that. (*aſide*)

SIR BASHFULL.

She has received the diamond buckles. They were delivered to her maid ſealed up, and the man never ſtaid to be aſked a queſtion. I ſaw them in her own hand: but not a ſyllable eſcaped her. She was not in the leaſt ſoftened, obſtinate as a mule!

LOVEMORE.

The manner of conveying your preſent was not well judged. Why did not you make me the bearer?

SIR BASHFULL.

I wiſh I had. She talks of parting; and ſo to avoid coming to extremities, I have even thought of telling her the whole truth at once.

LOVEMORE.

How! acquaint her with your paſſion?

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

Ay, and truſt to her honour. I could not venture to ſpeak; I ſhould bluſh, and faulter, and look ſilly; and ſo I have writ a letter to her. Here it is ſigned and ſealed, but not directed. I got into a puzzle about that. Servants, you know, are always putting their own conſtruction upon things.

LOVEMORE.

No doubt: and then your ſecret flies all over the town.

SIR BASHFULL.

That's what alarmed me. You ſhall write the ſuperſcription, and ſend it to her.

LOVEMORE.

No, that won't do. Give her a letter under your hand? I'll ſpeak to her for you: let me try how her pulſe beats.

SIR BASHFULL.

But a letter may draw an anſwer from her, and then, you know, *(ſmiling at him)* I ſhall have it under her hand.

LOVEMORE.

I don't like this hurry: we had better take time to conſider of it.

SIR BASHFULL.

No, I can't defer the buſineſs of my heart a ſingle moment. It burns like a fever here. Sit down, and write the direction; I'll ſtep and ſend the ſervant.

vant. He ſhall carry it, as if it were a letter from yourſelf.

Enter SIDEBOARD.

SIDEBOARD.

Sir Brilliant Faſhion is below, Sir.

LOVEMORE.

What brings him? He will only interrupt us. Go and talk to him, Sir Baſhfull; hear what he has to ſay; amuſe him; any thing rather than let him come up.

SIR BASHFULL.

I am gone: he ſhan't moleſt you.

[*Exit with* Sideboard.

LOVEMORE.

Fly, make haſte; and don't let him know that I am here.—A lucky accident this; I have gained time by it. All matters were in a right train, and he himſelf levelling the road for me, and now this letter blows me up into the air at once. Some unlucky planet rules to-day. Firſt the widow Bellmour; a hair-breadth ſcrape I had of it, and now almoſt ruined here! What in the name of wonder has he writ to her?—Friendſhip and wafer, by your leave.—But will that be delicate?—Po! honour has always a great deal to preach upon theſe occaſions; but then the buſineſs of my love!—Very true; the paſſions need but ſay a word, and their buſineſs is done. (*opens the letter, and reads*) This muſt never reach her. I'll write a letter from myſelf. (*ſits down, writes, and ſtarts up*) I hear him coming: no; all

all ſafe. (*writes*) This will do:—vaſtly well. Her huſband's inhumanity! Ay, mention that.—The diamonds may be a preſent from me: yes, I'll venture it—There, there; that will do—Long adored—Ay—ſweeteſt revenge.——Ay—Eternal admirer—Lovemore.——Now, now, let me ſee it.—Admirable! this will do the buſineſs. (*ſeals the letter*)

Enter SIR BASHFULL.

SIR BASHFULL.

Well, have you ſent it?

LOVEMORE.

Not yet: I am writing the direction.

SIR BASHFULL.

And where is that blockhead?——Sideboard!

Enter SIDEBOARD.

SIR BASHFULL.

Numſkull, why don't you wait?—Mr. Lovemore wants you.

LOVEMORE.

Step and deliver this to your Lady, and if ſhe pleaſes I will wait upon her.

SIR BASHFULL.

Charming!——Take it up ſtairs directly.

SIDEBOARD.

Up ſtairs, Sir? My Lady is in the next room.

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

Take it to her; make haſte; begone. *(Exit Sideboard)* I hope this will ſucceed: I ſhall be for ever obliged to you, and ſo will her Ladyſhip.

LOVEMORE.

I hope ſhe will, and I ſhall be proud to ſerve her.

SIR BASHFULL.

You are very good. She won't prove ungratefull, I dare anſwer for her.—I ſhould like to ſee how ſhe receives the letter.---The door is conveniently open.---I will have a peep. Ay, there; there ſhe ſits.

LOVEMORE.

Where, Sir Baſhfull?

SIR BASHFULL.

Huſh, no noiſe.——There, do you ſee her? She has the letter in her hand——This is a critical moment: I am all over in a tremble.

LOVEMORE.

Silence; not a word. She opens it.---*(aſide)* Now, my dear Cupid, befriend me now, and your altar ſhall ſmoke with incenſe.

SIR BASHFULL.

She colours!

LOVEMORE.

I like that riſing bluſh: a ſoft and tender token.

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

She turns pale.

LOVEMORE.

The natural working of the paſſions.

SIR BASHFULL.

And now ſhe reddens again!---What is ſhe at now?---There, ſhe has tore the letter in two:---I am a loſt, an undone man. (*walks away*)

LOVEMORE.

She has flung it away with indignation: I am un-undone too. (*aſide, and walks away from the door*)

SIR BASHFULL.

Mr. Lovemore, you ſee what it is all come to.

LOVEMORE.

I am ſorry to ſee ſo haughty a ſpirit.

SIR BASHFULL.

An arrogant, ungrateful woman! to make ſuch a return to ſo kind a letter!

LOVEMORE.

Ay, ſo kind a letter!

SIR BASHFULL.

Did you ever ſee ſuch an inſolent ſcorn?

LOVE-

LOVEMORE.

I never was ſo diſappointed in all my life.

SIR BASHFULL.

A letter full of the tendereſt proteſtations!

LOVEMORE.

Yes; an unreſerved declaration of love!

SIR BASHFULL.

Made with the greateſt frankneſs; throwing myſelf at her very feet!

LOVEMORE.

Did ſhe once ſmile? Was there the fainteſt gleam of approbation in her countenance?

SIR BASHFULL.

She repaid it all with ſcorn, with pride, contempt, and inſolence. I cannot bear this; deſpiſed, ſpurned, and treated like a puppy.

LOVEMORE.

There it ſtings——like a puppy indeed!

SIR BASHFULL.

Is there a thing in nature ſo mortifying to the pride of man, as to find oneſelf rejected and deſpiſed by a fine woman, who is conſcious of her power, and triumphs in her cruelty?

LOVEMORE.

It is the moſt damnable circumſtance!——

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

My dear Mr. Lovemore, I am obliged to you for taking this matter ſo much to heart.

LOVEMORE.

I take it more to heart than you aware of.

SIR BASHFULL.

This is mortifying; enough to make one aſhamed all the reſt of one's life.

LOVEMORE.

I did not expect this ſullen ill-humour.

SIR BASHFULL.

Did you ever know ſo obſtinate, ſo uncomplying a temper?

Enter SIR BRILLIANT.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Sir Baſhfull, I forgot to tell you——

LOVEMORE.

He again! he hunts me up and down, as the vice did the devil, with a dagger of lath, in the old comedy. (*aſide*)

SIR BRILLIANT.

Hey!---what's the matter?---You ſeem both out of humour: what does this mean? Have you quarrelled?

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

No, Sir, no quarrell:---why would my booby ſervants let him in again? (*aſide*)

SIR BRILLIANT.

Strike me ſtupid, but you look very queer upon it.---Lovemore is borrowing money, I ſuppoſe: Sir Baſhfull is driving a hard bargain, and you can't agree about the premium. Sir Baſhfull, let my friend Lovemore have the money?

SIR BASHFULL.

Money!——what does he mean?

SIR BRILLIANT.

Both out of humour, I ſee: well, as you will. You have no reaſon to be in harmony with yourſelves; my ſtars ſhine with a kinder aſpect. Here, here, behold a treaſury of love. I came back on purpoſe to ſhew it to you. (*takes a ſhagreen caſe out of his pocket*) See what a preſent I have received; a magnificent pair of diamond buckles, by all that's amiable.

LOVEMORE.

How?

SIR BASHFULL. (*walking up to him*)

A pair of diamond buckles!

SIR BRILLIANT.

How ſuch a preſent ſhould be ſent to me is more than I can explain at preſent. Perhaps my friend Love-

Lovemore gained ſome intelligence in the quarter where I ſurprized him to-day, on a viſit which I little ſuſpected.

LOVEMORE.

That was to ſerve you: I know nothing of this buſineſs.

SIR BRILLIANT.

The pain in your ſide, I hope, is better.

LOVEMORE.

Po! this is only to diſtract your attention, Sir Baſhfull.

SIR BASHFULL.

So I ſuppoſe. And was this a preſent to you?

SIR BRILLIANT.

A preſent, Sir. The conſequence of having ſome tolerable phraſe, a perſon, and a due degree of attention to the ſervice of the ladies.—Do you envy me, Sir Baſhfull?

SIR BASHFULL.

I can't but ſay I do.—(*turns to Lovemore*) My buckles, by all that's falſe in woman!

LOVEMORE.

Take no notice.—(*walks aſide*) Has he ſupplanted me here too, as well as with the widow?

SIR BRILLIANT.

What's the matter with you both?—Burning with envy!

SIR BASHFULL.

And I ſuppoſe an elegant epiſtle, or a well-penned billet-doux, accompanied this token of the lady's affection.

SIR BRILLIANT.

That would have been an agreeable addition, but it is ſtill to come. Too many favours at once might overwhelm a body. A country-looking fellow, as my people tell me, left this, curiouſly ſealed up, at my houſe: he would not ſay from whence he came: I ſhould know that in time, was all they could get from him, and I am now panting to learn where this mighty ſucceſs has attended me. Sir Baſhfull, I came, ſaw, and conquered; ha! ha! ha!

SIR BASHFULL.

But may not this be from ſome lady, who imagines that you ſent it, and therefore chuſes to reject your preſent?

SIR BRILLIANT.

Oh! no; that cannot be the caſe. A little knowledge of the world would ſoon convince you that ladies do not uſually reject preſents from the man, who has the good fortune to pleaſe by his manner, a taſte for dreſs, and a certain *je ne ſcai quoi* in his perſon and converſation.

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

So I believe.—(*walks aſide*) What ſay you to this, Mr. Lovemore?

LOVEMORE.

She would not have torn a letter from him.

SIR BRILLIANT.

No, Sir Baſhfull; a preſent from me would not have been returned back upon my hands.

SIR BASHFULL.

I dare ſay not.—(*to Lovemore*) I ſuppoſe ſhe will give him my three hundred pounds into the bargain.

LOVEMORE.

After this, I ſhall wonder at nothing.

SIR BRILLIANT.

What mortified countenances they both put on! (*looks at them, and laughs*)

SIR BASHFULL. (*walking up to Sir Brilliant*)

And I ſuppoſe you expect to have this lady?

SIR BRILLIANT.

No doubt of it. This is the forerunner, I think. Hey, Lovemore!—Sir Baſhfull, this it is to be in luck. Ha! ha! (*laughs at them both*)

LOVEMORE *and* SIR BASHFULL.

(*both forcing a laugh*)

Ha! ha!

SIR BRILLIANT.

You both ſeem ſtrangely picqued.—Lovemore, what makes you ſo uneaſy?

LOVEMORE.

You flatter yourſelf, and you wrong me—I—I—
(*walks away*)

SIR BASHFULL.

He is a true friend: he is uneaſy on my account.
(*aſide, and looking at Lovemore*)

SIR BRILLIANT.

And Sir Baſhfull, ſomething has daſhed your ſpirits. Do you repine at my ſucceſs?

SIR BASHFULL.

I can't but ſay I do, Sir.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Oh! very well; you are not diſpoſed to be good company. *A l'honneur*, gentlemen: finiſh your money matters. Lovemore, where do you ſpend the evening?

LOVEMORE.

A good evening to you, Sir Brilliant: I am engaged. Buſineſs with Sir Baſhfull, you ſee——

SIR

SIR BRILLIANT.

Well, don't let me be of inconvenience to you. Fare ye well, gentlemen. Thou dear pledge of love *(looking at the buckles)* thus let me claſp thee to my heart.——Sir Baſhfull, your ſervant.

[*Exit.*

SIR BASHFULL.

What think you now, Mr. Lovemore?

LOVEMORE.

All unaccountable, Sir.

SIR BASHFULL.

By all that's falſe, I am gulled, cheated, and impoſed upon. I am deceived, and dubbed a rank cuckold. It is too clear; ſhe has given him the buckles, and I ſuppoſe my bank-notes have taken the ſame courſe.——Diamond buckles, and three hundred pounds for Sir Brilliant! A reward for his merit!

LOVEMORE.

He is the favourite, and I have been working for him all this time.

SIR BASHFULL.

I now ſee through all her artifices. My reſolution is fixed. If I can but get ocular demonſtration of her guilt; If I can but get the means of proving to the whole world that ſhe is vile enough to cuckold me, I ſhall then be happy.

LOVEMORE.

Why that will be ſome conſolation!

SIR BASHFULL.

So it will: kind Heaven, grant me that at leaſt; make it plain that ſhe diſhonours me, and I am amply revenged.—Hark! I hear her coming. She ſhall know all I think, and all I feel. I have done with her for ever.

LOVEMORE. (*aſide*)

Let me fly the impending ſtorm. If I ſtay, detection and diſgrace purſue me.——Sir Baſhfull, I am ſorry to ſee matters take this turn. I have done all in my power, and ſince there is no room to hope for ſucceſs, I take my leave, and wiſh you a good night.

SIR BASHFULL.

No, no; you ſhall not leave me in this diſtreſs. You ſhall hear me tell her her own, and be a witneſs of our ſeparation. (*holding him*)

LOVEMORE.

Excuſe me: after what has paſſed, I ſhall never be able to endure the ſight of her. Fare you well; I muſt be gone; good night, Sir Baſhfull.

(*ſtruggling to go*)

SIR BASHFULL.

You are my beſt friend: I cannot part with you. (*ſtands between him and the door*) Stay and hear what ſhe

ſhe has to ſay for herſelf; you will ſee what a turn ſhe will give to the buſineſs.

LOVEMORE. (*aſide*)

What turn ſhall I give it?——Confuſion! here ſhe comes: I muſt weather the ſtorm.

Enter LADY CONSTANT.

LADY CONSTANT.

After this behaviour, Mr. Lovemore, I am ſurprized, Sir, that you can think of ſtaying a moment longer in this houſe.

LOVEMORE.

Madam, I——'ſdeath! I have no invention to aſſiſt me at a pinch. (*aſide*)

SIR BASHFULL.

Mr. Lovemore is my friend, Madam, and I deſire he will ſtay in my houſe as long as he pleaſes.—Hey, Lovemore! (*looks at him and ſmiles*)

LOVEMORE. (*aſide*)

All muſt out, I fear.

LADY CONSTANT.

Your friend, Sir Baſhfull!—And do you authorize him to take this unbecoming liberty? Have you given him permiſſion to ſend me a letter, ſo extravagant in the very terms of it?

LOVEMORE. (*aſide*)

Ay, now it's coming, and impudence itſelf has not a word to ſay.

SIR BASHFULL.

I desired him to send that letter, Madam.

LOVEMORE.

Sir Bashfull desired me, Ma'am.

(bowing respectfully)

SIR BASHFULL.

I desired him.

LOVEMORE.

All at his request, Ma'am.

LADY CONSTANT.

And am I to be made your sport?—I wonder, Mr. Lovemore, that you would condescend to make yourself a party in so poor a plot. Do you presume upon a trifling mark of civility, which you persuaded me to accept of this morning? Do you come disguised under a mask of friendship, to help this gentleman in his design against my honour, and my happiness?

LOVEMORE. *(aside)*

Fairly caught, and nothing can bring me off—

SIR BASHFULL.

A mask of friendship!—He is a true friend, Madam; he sees how ill I am treated, and let me tell you, there is not a word of truth in that letter.

LOVEMORE.

Not a syllable of truth, Ma'am—*(aside)* This will do: his own nonsense will save me.

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

It was all done to try you, Madam.

LOVEMORE.

Nothing more, Ma'am: merely to try you.

SIR BASHFULL.

By way of experiment only; juſt to ſee how you would behave upon it.

LOVEMORE.

Nothing elſe was intended; pure innocent mirth.

LADY CONSTANT.

You have been both notably employed. The exploit is worthy of you. Your ſnare is ſpread for a woman, and if you had ſucceeded, the fame of ſo bright an action would add mightily to two ſuch illuſtrious characters.

SIR BASHFULL.

A ſnare ſpread for her! mark that Mr. Lovemore: ſhe calls it enſnaring.

LOVEMORE.

Enſnared to her own good. (*To Sir Baſhfull*)—He has pleaded admirably for me. (*aſide*)

LADY CONSTANT.

As to you, Sir Baſhfull, I have long ago ceaſed to wonder at your conduct: you have loſt the power of ſurprizing me; but when Mr. Lovemore becomes an accomplice in ſo mean a plot—

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

I am in no plot, madam, and no body wants to enſnare you; do we, Lovemore?

LOVEMORE.

Sir Baſhfull knows that no harm was intended.

SIR BASHFULL.

Yes, I am in the ſecret, and my friend Lovemore meant no harm.

LOVEMORE.

If the letter had ſucceeded, Sir Baſhfull knows there would have been no harm in it.

SIR BASHFULL.

No harm in nature; but I now ſee how things are; and ſince your ladyſhip will liſten to nothing for your own good, it is too plain from all that has paſſed between us, that our tempers are by no means fitted for each other, and I am ready to part whenever you pleaſe: nay, I will part.

LADY CONSTANT.

And that is the only point, in which we can agree, Sir.

SIR BASHFULL.

Had the letter been ſent from another quarter, it would have have met with a better reception: we know where your ſmiles are beſtowed.

LADY

LADY CONSTANT.

Deal in calumny, Sir; give free ſcope to malice; I diſdain your inſinuations.

SIR BASHFULL.

The fact is too clear, and reproaches are now too late. This is the laſt of our converſing together; and you may take this by the way, you are not to believe one ſyllable of that letter.

LOVEMORE.

There is not a ſyllable of it deſerves the leaſt credit, Ma'am.

SIR BASHFULL.

It was all a mere joke, Madam: was not it, Lovemore?—And as to your being a fine woman, and as to any paſſion that any body has conceived for you, there was no ſuch thing; you can witneſs for me, Lovemore: can't you?

LADY CONSTANT.

Oh! you are witneſſes for one another.

LOVEMORE.

Sir Baſhfull knows the fairneſs of my intentions, and I know his.—(*aſide*) He has acquitted me better than I expected, thanks to his abſurdity.

LADY CONSTANT.

Go on, and aggravate your ill uſage, gentlemen.

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

It was all a bam, madam, a ſcene we thought proper to act. Let us laugh at her. (*goes up to Lovemore*)

LOVEMORE.

With all my heart—(*aſide*) A ſilly blockhead! I can't help laughing at him. (*laughing heartily*)

SIR BASHFULL. (*laughing with him*)

Ha! ha!—ha!—all a bam; nothing elſe; a contrivance to make ſport for ourſelves.—Hey, Lovemore?

LADY CONSTANT.

This uſage is inſupportable. I ſhall not ſtay for an explanation. Two ſuch worthy confederates!—is my chair ready there? You my depend, Sir, that this is the laſt time you will ſee me in this houſe.

[*Exit.*

SIR BASHFULL.

Agreed; a bargain; with all my heart. Lovemore I have managed this well.

LOVEMORE.

Charmingly managed! I did not think you had ſo much ſpirit.

SIR BASHFULL.

I have found her out. The intrigue is to too plain. She and Sir Brilliant are both detected.

LOVE-

LOVEMORE.

I never ſuſpected that Sir Brilliant was the happy man. I wiſh I had ſucceeded, had it been only to mortify his vanity.

SIR BASHFULL.

And ſo do I: I wiſh it too: but never own the letter: deny it to the laſt.

LOVEMORE.

You may depend upon my ſecrecy.

SIR BASHFULL.

I am for ever obliged to you. A fooliſh woman! how ſhe ſtands in her own light?

LOVEMORE.

Truly I think ſhe does. But ſince I have no intereſt with her ladyſhip, I ſhall now ſound a retreat, and leave matters to your own diſcreiton. Succeſs attend you. (*going*)

SIR BASHFULL.

You muſt not forſake me in this diſtreſs.

LOVEMORE.

Had your lady proved tractable, I ſhould not have cared how long I had ſtaid. But ſince things are come to this paſs, I ſhall now go and ſee what kind of reception I am to meet with from Mrs. Lovemore.

SIR

SIR BASHFULL.

Don't let her know that you have a regard for her.

LOVEMORE.

Oh! no; I ſee the conſequence.—*(aſide)* Well off this time; and Madam Fortune, if I truſt you again, you ſhall play me what prank you pleaſe. Sir Baſhfull, your's. (*going*)

SIR BASHFULL.

A thouſand thanks to you. And harkye, if I can ſerve you with your lady——

LOVEMORE.

I am much obliged to you: but I ſhall endeavour to go on, without giving you the trouble of aſſiſting me. And do you hear? aſſure my Lady Conſtant that I meant nothing but to ſerve your intereſt.

[*Exit.*

SIR BASHFULL.

Rely upon my management. I can acquit you.—My Lady Conſtant! Lady Conſtant!—Let me chaſe her from thoughts: can I do it? Rage, fury, love——no more of love! I am glad ſhe tore the letter. Odſo! yonder it lies. It is only torn in two, and ſhe may ſtill piece the fragments together. I'll pick up the letter this moment: it ſhall never appear in evidence againſt me. As to Sir Brilliant, his motions ſhall be watched: I know how to proceed with Madam, and if I can but prove the fact, every body will ſay that I am ill uſed by her.

End of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT the FIFTH.

Scene, an Apartment at Mr. LOVEMORE'S.

Enter Mrs. LOVEMORE, *elegantly dreſs'd*; MUSLIN *following her.*

MUSLIN.

WHY to be ſure, Ma'am, it is ſo for certain, and you are very much in the right of it.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

I fancy I am: I ſee the folly of my former conduct. I am determined never to let my ſpirits ſink into a melancholy ſtate again.

MUSLIN.

Why, that's the very thing, Ma'am; the very thing I have been always preaching up to you. Did not I always ſay, ſee company, Ma'am, take your pleaſure, and never break your heart for any man? This is what I always ſaid.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

And you have ſaid enough: ſpare yourſelf the trouble now.

MUSLIN.

I always ſaid ſo! And what did the world ſay? Heavens bleſs her for a ſweet woman! and a plague go with him for an inhuman, barbarous, bloody—murdering brute.

Mrs,

Mrs. Lovemore.

Well, truce with your impertinence; your tongue runs on at ſuch a rate.

Muslin.

Nay, don't be angry: they did ſay ſo indeed. But dear heart, how every body will be over joy'd, when they find you have pluck'd up a little! As for me, it gives me new life, to have ſo much company in the houſe, and ſuch a racketting at the door with coaches and chairs, enough to hurry a body out of one's wits. Lard, this is another thing, and you look quite like another thing, Ma'am, and that dreſs quite becomes you. I ſuppoſe, Ma'am, you will never wear your negligée again. It is not fit for you indeed, Ma'am. It might paſs very well with ſome folks, Ma'am, but the like of you—

Mrs. Lovemore.

Will you never have done? Go and ſee who is coming up ſtairs.

Enter Mrs. Bellmour.

Mrs. Lovemore.

Mrs. Bellmour, I revive at the ſight of you. Muſlin, do you ſtep, and do as I ordered you.

Muslin.

What the deuce can ſhe be at now? [*Exit.*

Mrs Bellmour.

You ſee I am punctual to my time.—Well I admire your dreſs of all things.—It's mighty pretty.

Mrs.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

I am glad you like it. But under all this appearance of gaiety, I have at the bottom but an aching heart.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Be ruled by me, and I'll anſwer for the event. Why really, now you look juſt as you ſhou'd do.—Why neglect ſo fine a figure?

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

You are ſo obliging!

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

And ſo true!——What was beautiful before, is now heightened by the additional ornaments of dreſs; and if you will but animate and inſpire the whole by thoſe graces of the mind which I am ſure you poſſeſs, the impreſſion cannot fail of being effectual upon all beholders, and even upon the depraved mind of Mr. Lovemore.—You have not ſeen him ſince—have you?

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

He dined at home, but was ſoon upon the wing to his uſual haunts.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

If he does but come home time enough, depend upon it my plot will take. And have you got together a good deal of company?

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Yes; a tolerable party.

Mrs. Bellmour.

That's right: ſhew him that you will conſult your own pleaſure.

Mrs. Lovemore.

A-propos, as ſoon as I came home I received a letter from Sir Brilliant, in a ſtile of warmth and tenderneſs that would aſtoniſh you. He begs to ſee me again, and has ſomething particular to communicate. I left it in my dreſſing-room; you ſhall ſee it by and by: I took your advice, and ſent him word he might come. That lure brought him hither immediately: he makes no doubt of his ſucceſs with me.

Mrs. Bellmour.

Well! two ſuch friends as Sir Brilliant and Mr. Lovemore, I believe, never exiſted!

Mrs. Lovemore.

Their falſehood to each other is unparalleled. I left Sir Brilliant at the card-table: as ſoon as he can diſengage himſelf, he will quit his company in purſuit of me. I forgot to tell you; my Lady Conſtant is here.

Mrs. Bellmour.

Is ſhe?

Mrs. Lovemore.

She is, and has been making the ſtrangeſt diſcovery: Mr. Lovemore has had a deſign there too!

Mrs.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Oh! I don't doubt him: but the more proof we have the better.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

There is ſufficient proof: you muſt know, Ma'am, (*a rap at the door*) as I live and breathe, I believe this is Mr. Lovemore.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

If it is, every thing goes on as I could wiſh.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

I hear his voice, it is he. How my heart beats!

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Courage, and the day's our own. He muſt not ſee me yet: where ſhall I run?

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

In there, Ma'am. Make haſte; I hear his ſtep on the ſtairs.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Succeſs attend you. I am gone. [*Exit.*

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

I am frightened out of my ſenſes. What the event may be I fear to think; but I muſt go through with it.

Enter LOVEMORE.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

You are welcome home, Sir.

LOVEMORE.

Mrs. Lovemore, your ſervant.
(*without looking at her*)

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

It is ſomewhat rare to ſee you at home ſo early.

LOVEMORE.

I ſaid I ſhould come home, did not I? I always like to be as good as my word.—What could the Widow mean by this uſage? to make an appointment, and break it thus abruptly! (*aſide*)

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

He ſeems to muſe upon it. (*aſide*)

LOVEMORE. (*aſide*)

She does not mean to do ſo treacherous a thing as to jilt me? Oh, Lord! I am wonderfully tired.
(*yawns, and ſinks into an armed chair*)

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Are you indiſpoſed, my dear?

LOVEMORE.

No, my love; I thank you, I am very well;—a little fatigued only, with jolting over the ſtones all the way into the city this morning. I have paid a few viſits this afternoon.—Confoundedly tired.—Where's William?

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Do you want any thing?

LOVEMORE.

Only my cap and ſlippers. I am not in ſpirits, I think. *(yawns)*

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

You never are in ſpirits at home, Mr. Lovemore.

LOVEMORE.

I beg your pardon: I never am any where more chearful. *(ſtretching his arms)* I wiſh I may die if I an't very happy at home,——very *(yawns)* very happy!

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

I can hear otherwiſe. I am informed that Mr. Lovemore is the promoter of mirth and good humour wherever he goes.

LOVEMORE.

Oh! no, you over-rate me; upon my ſoul you do.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

I can hear, Sir, that no perſon's company is ſo acceptable to the ladies; that your wit inſpires every thing; you have your compliment for one, your ſmile for another, a whiſper for a third, and ſo on, Sir: you divide your favours, and are every where, but at home, all whim, vivacity, and ſpirit.

LOVEMORE.

Ho! ho! *(laughing)* how can you talk ſo? I ſwear I can't help laughing at the fancy. All whim, vivacity, and ſpirit! I ſhall burſt my ſides. How can you banter one ſo?——I divide my favours too! ——Oh, heavens! I can't ſtand this railiery: ſuch a deſcription of me!——I that am rather ſaturnine, of a ſerious caſt, and inclined to be penſive! I can't help laughing at the oddity of the conceit.——Oh Lord! Oh Lord! (*laughs*)

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Juſt as you pleaſe, Sir. I ſee that I am ever to be treated with indifference.

(*walks acroſs the ſtage*)

LOVEMORE.

(*Riſes and walks the contrary way.*

I can't put this Widow Bellmour out of my head. (*aſide*)

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

If I had done any thing to provoke this uſage, this cold, determined contempt——(*walking*)

LOVEMORE.

I wiſh I had done with that buſineſs entirely; but my deſires are kindled, and muſt be ſatisfied. (*aſide*)

(*They walk for ſome time ſilently by each other.*

Mrs.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

What part of my conduct gives you offence, Mr. Lovemore?

LOVEMORE.

Still harping upon that ungrateful ſtring!——but prithee don't ſet me a laughing again.——Offence!---nothing gives me offence, child!--you know I am very fond---*(yawns and walks)*---I like you of all things, and think you a moſt admirable wife;---prudent, managing,---careleſs of your own perſon, and very attentive to mine;---not much addicted to pleaſure,---grave, retired, and domeſtic; you govern your houſe; pay the tradeſmen's bills, *(yawns)* ſcold the ſervants, and love your huſband:---upon my ſoul, a very good wife!---As good a ſort of a wife *(yawns)* as a body might wiſh to have.——Where's William? I muſt go to bed.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

To bed ſo early! Had not you better join the company?

LOVEMORE.

I ſhan't go out to-night.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

But I mean the company in the dining-room.

LOVEMORE.

Company in the dining-room! *(ſtares at her)*

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Yes: I invited them to a rout.

LOVEMORE.

A rout in my houſe!---and you dreſſed out too! ---What is all this?

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

You have no objection I hope.

LOVEMORE.

Objection!—no, I like company, you know, of all things; I'll go and join them: Who are they all?

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

You know 'em all; and there's your friend Sir Brilliant.

LOVEMORE.

Is he there? I ſhall be glad to ſee him. But pray, how comes all this about?

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

I intend to ſee company often.

LOVEMORE.

Do you?

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Ay, and not look tamely on, while you revel luxuriouſly in a courſe of pleaſure. I ſhall purſue my own plan of diverſion.

LOVEMORE.

Do ſo, Ma'am: the change in your temper will not be diſagreeable.

Mrs.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

And ſo I ſhall, Sir, I aſſure ye. Adieu to melancholy, and welcome pleaſure, wit and gaiety, (*ſhe walks about and ſings.*)

LOVEMORE.

What the devil has come over her? And what in the name of wonder does all this mean?

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Mean, Sir!—It means, it means—how can you aſk me what it means?—Well, to be ſure, the ſobriety of that queſtion!—Do you think a woman of ſpirit can have leiſure to tell her meaning, when ſhe is all air, alertneſs, rapture and enjoyment?

LOVEMORE.

She's mad!—Stark mad!

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

You're miſtaken, Sir,—not mad, but in ſpirits, that's all. Am I too flighty for you?—Perhaps I am: you are of a ſaturnine diſpoſition, inclin'd to think a little, or ſo. Well, don't let me interrupt you; don't let me be of any inconvenience. That would be the unpoliteſt thing; a married couple to be interfering and encroaching on each other's pleaſures! Oh hideous! it would be Gothic to the laſt degree. Ha! ha! ha!

LOVEMORE. (*forcing a laugh*)

Ha! ha!—Ma'am, you—ha! ha! you are perfectly right.

Mrs.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Nay, but I don't like that laugh now: I positively don't like it. Can't you laugh out as you were used to do? For my part, I'm determined to do nothing else all the rest of my life.

LOVEMORE.

This is the most astonishing thing! Ma'am I don't rightly comprehend——

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Oh Lud! oh Lud!---with that important face! Well, but come! what don't you comprehend?

LOVEMORE.

There is something in this treatment that I don't so well——

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Oh! are you there, Sir! How quickly they, who have no sensibility for the peace and happiness of others, can feel for themselves, Mr. Lovemore!--- But that's a grave reflection, and I hate reflection.

LOVEMORE.

What has she got into her head? This sudden change, Mrs. Lovemore, let me tell you——

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Nay, don't be frighten'd: there is no harm in innocent mirth, I hope; never look so grave upon it. I assure you, Sir, that though, on your part, you seem deter-

determined to offer conſtant indignities to your wife, and though the laws of retaliation wou'd in ſome ſort exculpate her, if, when provok'd to the utmoſt, exaſperated beyond all enduring, ſhe ſhould, in her turn, make him know what it is to receive an injury in the tendereſt point—

LOVEMORE.

Madam! (*angrily*)

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Well, well, don't be alarmed. I ſhan't retaliate: my own honour will ſecure you there; you may depend upon it.—Will you come and play a game at cards? Well, do as you like; you won't come? No, no. I ſee you won't.—What ſay you to a bit of ſupper with us?---Nor that neither?---Follow your inclinations: it is not material where a body eats, you know; the company expects me; adieu, Mr. Lovemore, yours, yours. [*Exit ſinging.*

LOVEMORE.

This is a frolic I never ſaw her in before!---Laugh all the reſt of my life!--laws of retaliation!--an injury in the tendereſt point;---the company expects me, ---adieu! yours, yours!---(*mimicking her.*) What the devil is all this? Some of her female friends have been tampering with her. So, ſo; I muſt begin to look a little ſharp after madam. I'll go this moment into the card-room and watch whom ſhe whiſpers with, whom ſhe ogles with, and every circumſtance that can lead to---(*going*)

Enter

Enter MUSLIN *in a hurry.*

MUSLIN.

Madam, Madam,—here's your letter; I wou'd not for all the world that my maſter——

LOVEMORE.

What, is ſhe mad too? What's the matter, woman?

MUSLIN.

Nothing, Sir,---nothing: I wanted a word with my Lady, that's all, Sir.

LOVEMORE.

You wou'd not for the world that your maſter,---what was you going to ſay?---What paper's that?

MUSLIN.

Paper, Sir!

LOVEMORE.

Paper, Sir! let me ſee it.

MUSLIN.

Lord, Sir! how can you aſk a body for ſuch a thing. It's a letter to me, Sir, a letter from the country; a letter from my ſiſter, Sir. She bids me to buy her a *Shiver de Fize* cap, and a ſixteenth in the lottery; and tells me of a number ſhe dreamt of, that's all, Sir; I'll put it up.

LOVE-

LOVEMORE.

Let me look at it. Give it me this moment. *(reads)* To Mrs. Lovemore!---Brilliant Faſhion. This is a letter from the country, is it?

MUSLIN.

That, Sir---that is---no Sir,---no;---that's not ſiſter's letter.---If you will give me that back, Sir, I'll ſhew you the right one.

LOVEMORE.

Where did you get this?

MUSLIN.

Sir?

LOVEMORE.

Where did you get it?---Tell me truth.

MUSLIN.

Dear heart, you fright a body ſo---in the parlour, Sir,---I found it there.

LOVEMORE.

Very well!---leave the room.

MUSLIN.

The devil fetch it, I was never ſo out in my politicks, in all my days. [*Exit.*

LOVEMORE.

A pretty epiſtle truly! *(reads)* "When you com-

" command me, my deareſt Mrs. Lovemore, never to " touch again upon the ſubject of my love, you " command an impoſſibility. You excite the flame, " and forbid it to burn. Permit me once more to " throw myſelf on my knees, and implore your " compaſſion."——Compaſſion with a vengeance on him!——" Think you ſee me now with tender, " melting, ſupplicating eyes, languiſhing at your " feet."——Very well, Sir!——" Can you find it " in your heart to perſiſt in cruelty?---Grant me " but acceſs to you once more, and in addition to " what I already ſaid this morning, I will urge ſuch " motives"---Urge motives, will ye?---" as will " convince you, that you ſhould no longer heſitate " in gratitude, to reward him, who here makes a " vow of eternal conſtancy and love.

" BRILLIANT FASHION."

So! ſo! ſo! your very humble ſervant, Sir Brilliant Faſhion!——This is your friendſhip for me, is it?---you are mighty kind indeed, Sir,---but I thank you as much as if you had really done me the favour: and, Mrs. Lovemore, I'm your humble ſervant too. She intends to laugh all the reſt of her life! This letter will change her note. Yonder ſhe comes along the gallery, and Sir Brilliant in full chace of her. They come this way. Could I but detect them both now! I'll ſtep aſide, and who knows but the devil may tempt them to their undoing. A polite huſband I am: there's the coaſt clear for you, madam. [*Exit.*

Enter Mrs. LOVEMORE *and* SIR BRILLIANT.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

I have already told you my mind, Sir Brilliant. Your

Your civility is odious; your compliments fulſome; and your ſolicitations inſulting.——I muſt make uſe of harſh language, Sir: you provoke it.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Not retiring to ſolitude and diſcontent again, I hope, madam! Have a care, my dear Mrs. Lovemore, of a relapſe.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

No danger, Sir: don't be too ſolicitous about me. Why leave the company? Let me intreat you to return, Sir.

SIR BRILLIANT.

By Heaven, there is more rapture in being one moment *vis-a-vis* with you, than in the company of a whole drawing-room of beauties. Round you are melting pleaſures, tender tranſports, youthful loves, and blooming graces, all unfelt, neglected, and deſpiſed, by a taſteleſs, cold, unimpaſſioned huſband, while they might be all ſo much better employed to the purpoſes of ecſtaſy and bliſs.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

I am amazed, Sir, at this liberty.——What action of my life has authorized this aſſurance?——I deſire, Sir, you will deſiſt. Were I not afraid of the ill conſequences that might follow, I ſhould not heſitate a moment to acquaint Mr. Lovemore with your whole behaviour.

SIR BRILLIANT.

She won't tell her huſband!——A charming creature, and bleſſings on her for ſo convenient a hint.

She

She yields, by all my hopes!---What ſhall I ſay to overwhelm her ſenſes in a flood of nonſenſe? *(aſide)*

Go my heart's envoys, tender ſighs make haſte,---
Still drink delicious poiſon from thy eye,---
Raptures and paradiſe
Pant on thy lip, and to thy heart he preſs'd.

(forcing her all this time)

Enter Mr. LOVEMORE.

LOVEMORE.

Hell and diſtraction! this is too much.

SIR BRILLIANT.

What the devil's the matter now? *(kneels down to buckle his ſhoe)* This confounded buckle is always plaguing me. Lovemore! I rejoice to ſee thee. *(looking at each other)*

LOVEMORE.

And have you the confidence to look me in the face?

SIR BRILLIANT.

I was telling your lady here, of the moſt whimſical adventure——

LOVEMORE.

Don't add the meanneſs of falſehood to the black attempt of invading the happineſs of your friend. I did imagine, Sir, from the long intercourſe that has ſubſiſted between us, that you might have had delicacy enough, feeling enough, honour enough, Sir, not to meditate an injury like this.

SIR

SIR BRILLIANT.

Ay, it's all over, I am detected. *(aside)* Mr. Lovemore, I feel that I have been wrong, and will not attempt a vindication of myself. We have been friends hitherto, and if begging your pardon for this rashness will any ways atone——

LOVEMORE.

No, Sir, nothing can atone. The provocation you have given me, would justify my drawing upon you this instant, did not that lady, and this roof protect you.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Harsh language to a friend——

LOVEMORE.

Friend, Sir Brilliant?

SIR BRILLIANT.

If you will but hear me——

LOVEMORE.

Sir, I insist; I won't hear a word.

SIR BRILLIANT.

I declare upon my honour——

LOVEMORE.

Honour! for shame, Sir Brilliant: honour and friendship are sacred words, and you profane them both.

SIR BRILLIANT.

If imploring forgiveneſs of that lady——

LOVEMORE.

That lady!---I deſire you will never ſpeak to that lady.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Can you command a moment's patience?

LOVEMORE.

Sir, I am out of all patience: this muſt be ſettled between us: I have done for the preſent.

Enter SIR BASHFULL.

SIR BASHFULL.

Did not I hear loud words among you? I certainly did. What are you quarreling about?

LOVEMORE.

Read that, Sir Baſhfull. (*Gives him Sir Brilliant's letter*) Read that, and judge if I have not cauſe---(*Sir Baſhfull reads to himſelf.*)

SIR BRILLIANT.

Hear but what I have to ſay——

LOVEMORE.

No, Sir, no; we ſhall find a fitter time: as for you, Madam, I am ſatisfied with your conduct. I was indeed a little alarmed, but I have been a witneſs of

of your behaviour, and I am above harbouring low ſuſpicions.

SIR BASHFULL.

Upon my word, Mr. Lovemore, this is carrying the jeſt too far.

LOVEMORE.

It is the baſeſt action a gentleman can be guilty of; and to a perſon who never injured him, ſtill more criminal.

SIR BASHFULL.

Why ſo I think. Sir Brilliant, (*to him aſide*) here take this letter, and read it to him; his own letter to my wife.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Let me ſee it---(*takes the letter*)

SIR BASHFULL.

'Tis indeed, as you ſay, the vileſt action a gentleman can be guilty of.

LOVEMORE.

An unparallelled breach of friendſhip.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Not altogether ſo unparallelled: I believe it will not be found without a precedent---as for example ---(*reads*)

To My Lady Conſtant——

" *Why ſhould I conceal, my dear Madam, that your charms have awaken'd my tendereſt paſſions?*

LOVEMORE.

Confuſion! my letter---(*aſide*)

SIR BRILLIANT. (*reading*)

"*I long have lov'd you, long adored. Could I but* "*flatter myſelf*"---(*Lovemore walks about uneaſy; Sir Brilliant follows him*)

SIR BASHFULL.

There, Mr. Lovemore, the baſeſt treachery!

SIR BRILLIANT. (*Reads*)

"*Could I but flatter myſelf with the leaſt kind return.*"

LOVEMORE.

Confuſion! let me ſeize the letter out of his hand. (*Snatches it from him,*)

SIR BASHFULL.

An unparallelled breach of friendſhip, Mr. Lovemore.

LOVEMORE.

All a forgery, Sir; all a forgery.

SIR BASHFULL.

That I deny; it is the very identical letter my lady threw away with ſuch indignation. She tore it in two, and I have pieced it together.

LOVEMORE.

A mere contrivance to varniſh his guilt.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Ha! ha! my dear Lovemore, we know one another.

ther. Have not you been at the ſame work with the widow Bellmour?

LOVEMORE.

The widow Bellmour!—If I ſpoke to her, it was to ſerve you, Sir.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Are you ſure of that?

LOVEMORE.

Po! I won't ſtay a moment longer among ye. I'll go into another room, to avoid ye all. I know little or nothing of the widow Bellmour, Sir. (*opens the door; Enter Mrs. Bellmour*) Hell and deſtruction! —what fiend is conjured up here! Zoons! let me make my eſcape out of the houſe.

(*runs to the oppoſite door*)

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

I'll ſecure this paſs: you muſt not go, my dear.

LOVEMORE.

'Sdeath, Madam, give me way.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Nay, don't be in ſuch a hurry: I want to introduce an acquaintance of mine to you.

LOVEMORE.

I deſire, Madam——

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

My Lord, my Lord Etheridge; I am heartily glad to ſee your Lordſhip (*taking hold of him*)

Mrs. Lovemore.

Do, my dear, let me introduce this lady to you *(turning him to her)*

Lovemore.

Here's the devil and all to do! *(aſide)*

Mrs Bellmour.

My Lord, this is the moſt fortunate encounter!

Lovemore.

I wiſh I was fifty miles off. *(aſide)*

Mrs. Lovemore.

Mrs. Bellmour, give me leave to introduce Mr. Lovemore to you *(turning him to her)*

Mrs. Bellmour.

No, my dear Ma'am, let me introduce Lord Etheridge to you. *(pulling him)* My Lord——

Sir Brilliant.

In the name of wonder, what is all this?

Sir Bashfull.

This is another of his intrigues blown up.

Mrs. Lovemore.

My dear Ma'am you are miſtaken? This is my huſband.

Mrs. Bellmour.

Pardon me, Ma'am, 'tis my Lord Etheridge.

Mrs.

Mrs. Lovemore.

My dear, how can you be ſo ill-bred in your own houſe?—Mrs. Bellmour,—this is Mr. Lovemore.

Lovemore.

Are you going to toſs me in a blanket, Madam?—call up the reſt of your people, if you are.

Mrs. Bellmour.

Pſhaw! prithee now, my Lord, leave off your humours. Mrs. Lovemore, this is my Lord Etheridge, a lover of mine, who has made propoſals of marriage to me.

Lovemore.

Confuſion! let me get rid of theſe two furies (*breaks away from them.*)

Sir Bashfull.

He has been tampering with her too, has he?

Mrs. Bellmour (*follows him.*)

My Lord, I ſay! my Lord Etheridge! won't your Lordſhip know me?

Lovemore.

This is the moſt damnable accident! (*aſide*)

Mrs. Bellmour.

I hope your lordſhip has not forgot your appointment at my houſe this evening.

LOVEMORE.

I deſerve all this. (*aſide*)

MRS. BELLMOUR.

Pray, my Lord, what have I done, that you treat me with this coldneſs? Come, come, you ſhall have a wife: I will take compaſſion on you.

LOVEMORE.

Damnation! I can't ſtand it. (*aſide*)

SIR BASHFULL.

Murder will out: murder will out.

MRS. BELLMOUR.

Come, cheer up, my Lord: what the deuce, your dreſs is alter'd! what's become of the ſtar and the ribband? And ſo the gay, the florid, the magnifique Lord Etheridge, dwindles down into plain Mr. Lovemore, the married man! Mr. Lovemore, your moſt obedient, very humble ſervant, Sir.

LOVEMORE.

I can't bear to feel myſelf in ſo ridiculous a circumſtance. (*aſide*)

SIR BASHFULL.

He has been paſſing himſelf for a Lord; has he?

MRS. BELLMOUR.

I beg my compliments to your friend Mrs. Loveit: I am much obliged to you bothfor your very honourable deſigns. (*curtſying to him*)

LOVE-

LOVEMORE.

I was never ſo aſhamed in all my life!

SIR BRILLIANT.

So, ſo, ſo, all his pains were to hide the ſtar from me. This diſcovery is a perfect cordial to my dejected ſpirits.

MRS. BELLMOUR.

Mrs. Lovemore, I cannot ſufficiently acknowledge the providence that directed you to pay me a viſit, though I was wholly unknown to you; and I ſhall henceforth conſider you as my deliverer.

LOVEMORE.

Ay, it was ſhe that fainted away in the cloſet, and be damned to her jealouſy. (*aſide*)

SIR BRILLIANT.

By all that's whimſical, an odd ſort of an adventure this. My Lord, (*advances to him*) my Lord, my Lord Etheridge, as the man ſays in the play, "Your Lordſhip is right welcome back to Denmark."

LOVEMORE.

Now he comes upon me.—Oh! I'm in a fine ſituation. (*aſide*)

SIR BRILLIANT.

My Lord, I hope that ugly pain in your Lordſhip's ſide is abated.

LOVE-

LOVEMORE.

Abſurd, and ridiculous. (*aſide*)

SIR BRILLIANT.

There is nothing forming there I hope, my Lord.

LOVEMORE.

I ſhall come to an explanation with you, Sir.

SIR BRILLIANT.

The tennis-ball from Lord Rackett's unlucky left hand!

LOVEMORE.

No more at preſent, Sir Brilliant. I leave you now to yourſelves, and (*goes to the door in the back ſcene*)—'ſdeath another fiend! I am beſet by them.

Enter LADY CONSTANT.

LOVEMORE.

No way to eſcape?—(*attempts both ſtage doors, and is prevented*)

LADY CONSTANT.

Mr. Lovemore, it is the luckieſt thing in the world, that you are come home.

LOVEMORE.

Ay, it's all over—all muſt come to light.

LADY CONSTANT.

I have loſt every rubber; quite broke; four by honours

honours againſt me every time. Do, Mr. Lovemore, lend me another hundred.

LOVEMORE.

I would give a hundred pound you were all in Lapland. (*aſide*)

LADY CONSTANT.

Mrs. Lovemore, let me tell you, you are married to the falſeſt man; he has deceived me ſtrangely.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

I begin to feel for him, and to pity his uneaſineſs.

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Never talk of pity; let him be probed to the quick.

SIR BASHFULL.

The caſe is pretty plain, I think, now, Sir Brilliant.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Pretty plain, upon my ſoul. Ha! ha!

LOVEMORE.

I'll turn the tables upon Sir Baſhfull, for all this—(*takes Sir Baſhfull's letter out of his pocket*) where is the mighty harm now in this letter?

SIR BASHFULL.

Where's the harm?

LOVE-

LOVEMORE. (*reads*)

" *I cannot, my deareſt life, any longer behold—*

SIR BASHFULL.

Shame and confuſion! I am undone. (*aſide*)

LOVEMORE.

Hear this, Sir Baſhfull—" *The manifold vexations,* " *of which, thro' a falſe prejudice, I am myſelf the oc-* " *caſion.*

LADY CONSTANT.

What is all this?

SIR BASHFULL.

I am a loſt man. (*aſide*)

LOVEMORE.

Mind, Sir Baſhfull. " *I am therefore reſolved,* " *after many conflicts with myſelf, to throw off the* " *maſk, and frankly own a paſſion, which the fear of* " *falling into ridicule has in appearance ſuppreſſed.*"

SIR BASHFULL.

'Sdeath! I'll hear no more of it. (*ſnatches at the letter*)

LOVEMORE.

No, Sir; I reſign it here, where it was directed.

LADY CONSTANT.

It is his hand ſure enough.

LOVE-

LOVEMORE.

Yes, Madam, and thoſe are his ſentiments, which he explained to me more at large.

LADY CONSTANT. (*reads*)

" *Accept the preſents which I myſelf have ſent you;*
" *money, attendance, equipage, and every thing elſe you*
" *ſhall command; and in return, I ſhall only entreat you*
" *to conceal from the world that you have raiſed a flame*
" *in this heart, which will ever ſhew me,*

" *Your admirer,*

" *And your truly affectionate huſband,*

" BASHFULL CONSTANT."

ALL.

Ha! ha!——

SIR BRILLIANT.

So, ſo, ſo! he has been in love with his wife all this time, has he? Sir Baſhfull, will you go and ſee the new comedy with me?

SIR BASHFULL.

I ſhall bluſh through the world all the reſt of my life. (*aſide*)

SIR BRILLIANT.

Lovemore, don't you think it a baſe thing to invade the happineſs of a friend? or to do him a clandeſtine wrong? or to injure him with the woman he loves?

LOVE-

LOVEMORE.

To cut the matter ſhort with you, Sir, we have been traitors to each other; a couple of unprincipled, unreflecting profligates!

SIR BRILLIANT.

Profligates!

LOVEMORE.

Ay! both! we are pretty fellows indeed!

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

I am glad to find you are awakened to a ſenſe of your error.

LOVEMORE.

I am, Madam, and I am frank enough to own it. I am above attempting to diſguiſe my feelings, when I am conſcious they are on the ſide of truth and honour. With the ſincereſt remorſe, I aſk your pardon.—I ſhould aſk pardon of my Lady Conſtant too, but the fact is, Sir Baſhfull threw the whole affair in my way; and, when a huſband will be aſhamed of loving a valuable woman, he muſt not be ſurprized if other people take her caſe into conſideration, and love her for him.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Why, faith that does in ſome ſort make his apology.

SIR BASHFULL.

Sir Baſhfull! Sir Baſhfull! thou art ruined! *(aſide)*

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Well, Sir, upon certain terms, I don't know but I may ſign and ſeal your pardon.

LOVE-

LOVEMORE.

Terms!——what terms!

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

That you make due expiation of your guilt to that lady. *(pointing to Mrs. Lovemore)*

LOVEMORE.

That lady, Ma'am!—That lady has no reaſon to complain.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

No reaſon to complain, Mr. Lovemore!

LOVEMORE.

No, Madam, none! for whatever may have been my imprudences, they have had their ſource in your conduct.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

In my conduct, Sir!

LOVEMORE.

In your conduct!—I here declare before this company, and I am above miſrepreſenting the matter; I here declare, that no man in England could be better inclined to domeſtic happineſs, if you, Madam, on your part, had been willing to make home agreeable.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

There I confeſs he touches me. *(aſide)*

LOVE-

LOVEMORE.

You could take pains enough before marriage; you would put forth all your charms; practice all your arts; and make your features pleaſe by rule; for ever changing; running an eternal round of variety: and all this to win my affections: but when you had won them, you did not think them worth your keeping; never dreſſed, penſive, ſilent, melancholy; and the only entertainment in my houſe, was the dear pleaſure of a dull conjugal *tete-à-tete*; and all this inſipidity, becauſe you think the ſole merit of a wife conſiſts in her virtue: a fine way of amuſing a huſband, truly!

SIR BRILLIANT.

Upon my ſoul, and ſo it is——(*laughing*)

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Sir, I muſt own there is too much truth in what you ſay. This lady has opened my eyes, and convinced me there was a miſtake in my former conduct.

LOVEMORE.

Come, come, you need ſay no more. I forgive you; I forgive.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Forgive! I like that air of confidence, when you know that, on my ſide, it is at worſt an error in judgment; whereas on yours———

Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Po! po! never ſtand diſputing: you know each other's

other's faults and virtues: you have nothing to do but to mend the former, and enjoy the latter. There, there, there, kiſs and friends. There, Mrs. Lovemore, take your reclaimed libertine to your arms.

LOVEMORE.

'Tis in your power, Madam, to make a reclaimed libertine of me indeed.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

From this moment it ſhall be our mutual ſtudy to pleaſe each other.

LOVEMORE.

A match with all my heart. I ſhall hereafter be aſhamed only of my follies, but never aſhamed of owning that I ſincerely love you.

SIR BASHFULL.

Shan't you be aſhamed?

LOVEMORE.

Never, Sir.

SIR BASHFULL.

And will you keep me in countenance?

LOVEMORE.

I will.

SIR BASHFULL.

Give me your hand. I now forgive you all. My Lady Conſtant, I own the letter, I own the ſenti-

ments of it, (*embraces her*) and from this moment I take you to my heart.—Lovemore, Zookers! you have made a man of me.

LADY CONSTANT.

If you hold in this humour, Sir Bashfull, our quarrels are at an end.

SIR BRILLIANT.

And now I suppose I must make restitution here —(*gives Lady Constant the buckles*)

SIR BASHFULL.

Ay, ay, make restitution. Lovemore! this is the consequence of his having some tolerable phrase, and a person, Mr. Lovemore! ha! ha!—

SIR BRILLIANT.

Why, I own the laugh is against me. With all my heart; I am glad to see my friends happy at last. Lovemore, may I presume to hope for pardon at that lady's hands? (*points to Mrs. Lovemore*)

LOVEMORE.

My dear confederate in vice, your pardon is granted. Two sad libertines we have been. But come, give us your hand: we have used each other scurvily: for the future we will endeavour to atone for the errors of our past misconduct.

SIR BRILLIANT.

Agreed; we will henceforward behave like men, who have not forgot the obligations of truth and honour.

LOVE-

LOVEMORE.

And now I congratulate the whole company, that this buſineſs has had ſo happy a tendency to convince each of us of our folly.

MRS. BELLMOUR.

Pray, Sir, don't draw me into a ſhare of your folly.

LOVEMORE.

Come, come, my dear Ma'am, you are not without your ſhare of it. This will teach you for the future, to be content with one lover at a time, without liſtening to a fellow you know nothing of, becauſe he aſſumes a title, and ſpreads a fair report of himſelf.

MRS. BELLMOUR.

The reproof is juſt, I grant it.

LOVEMORE.

Come, let us join the company chearfully, keep our own ſecrets, and not make ourſelves the town-talk.

SIR BASHFULL.

Ay, ay; let us keep the ſecret.

LOVEMORE.

What, returning to your fears again? You will put me out of countenance, Sir Baſhfull.

SIR BASHFULL.

I have done.

LOVEMORE.

When your conduct is fair and upright, never be afraid of ridicule. Real honour and generous affection may bid defiance to all the ſmall wits in the kingdom. In my opinion, were the buſineſs of this day to go abroad into the world, it would prove a very uſeful leſſon: the men would ſee how their paſſions may carry them into the danger of wounding the boſom of a friend: and the ladies would learn, that, after the marriage rites are performed, they ought not to ſuffer their powers of pleaſing to languiſh away, but ſhould ſtill remember to ſacrifice to the Graces.

To win a man, when all your pains ſucceed,
The Way to Keep Him *is a taſk indeed.*

FINIS.

SONG

SONG for Mrs. CIBBER in the WAY TO KEEP HIM.

Written, at the revival of the play, by Mr. GARRICK.

I.

YE fair married dames, who ſo often deplore,
That a lover once bleſt, is a lover no more;
Attend to my counſel, nor bluſh to be taught,
That prudence muſt cheriſh, what beauty has caught.

II.

The bloom of your cheek, and the glance of your eye,
Your roſes and lilies, may make the men ſigh:
But roſes, and lilies, and ſighs paſs away,
And paſſion will die, as your beauties decay.

III.

Uſe the man that you wed, like your fav'rite GUITTAR,
Tho' muſic in both, they are both apt to jar;
How tuneful and ſoft from a delicate touch,
Not handled too roughly, nor play'd on too much!

IV.

The SPARROW *and* LINNET *will feed from your hand,*
Grow tame by your kindneſs, and come at command:
Exert with your huſband the ſame happy ſkill,
For hearts, like your birds, may be tam'd to your will.

V.

Be gay and good-humour'd, complying and kind,
Turn the chief of your care from your face to your mind:
'Tis there that a wife may her conqueſts improve,
And HYMEN *ſhall rivet the fetters of* LOVE.

All in the Wrong:

A

COMEDY,

Performed at the

THEATRE ROYAL

IN

DRURY-LANE.

In amore hæc omnia insunt vitia; injuriæ,
Suspiciones, inimicitiæ, induciæ,
Bellum, pax rursum.

TERENCE.

PROLOGUE.

Written and ſpoken by SAMUEL FOOTE, Eſq;

TO-Night, be it known to Box, Gall'ry, and Pit,
*Will be open'd the beſt * Summer-Warehouſe for Wit;*
The New Manufacture, Foote and Co. Undertakers;
Play, Pantomime, Opera, Farce,—by the Makers!
We ſcorn, like our brethren, our fortunes to owe
To Shakeſpeare, *and* Southern, *to* Otway, *and* Rowe.
Though our judgment may err, yet our juſtice is ſhewn,
For we promiſe to mangle no works but our own.
And moreover on this you may firmly rely,
If we can't make you laugh, that we won't make you cry.
For Roſcius, *who knew we were mirth-loving ſouls,*
Has lock'd up his lightning, his daggers, and bowls.
Reſolv'd that in buſkins no hero ſhall ſtalk,
He has ſhut us quite out of the Tragedy walk.
No blood, no blank verſe!—and in ſhort we're undone,
Unleſs you're contented with Frolic and Fun.
If tir'd of her round in the Ranelagh-mill,
There ſhould be but one female inclin'd to ſit ſtill;
If blind to the beauties, or ſick of the ſquall,
A party ſhould ſhun to catch cold at Vauxhall;
If at Sadler's ſweet Wells *the made wine ſhould be thick,*
The cheeſe-cakes turn ſour, or Miſs Wilkinſon *ſick;*
If the fume of the pipes ſhould oppreſs you in June,
Or the tumblers be lame, or the bells out of tune;
I hope you will call at our warehouſe in Drury;
We've a curious aſſortment of goods, I aſſure you;
Domeſtic and foreign, and all kinds of wares;
Engliſh *cloths*, Iriſh *linnen, and* French *petenlairs!*

* Mr. Garrick, at this time, had let his playhouſe for the ſummer months.

If

If for want of good cuſtom, or loſſes in trade,
The poetical partners ſhould bankrupts be made;
If from dealings too large, we plunge deeply in debt,
And WHEREAS *iſſue out in the* Muſes *Gazette;*
We'll on you our aſſigns *for* CERTIFICATES *call;*
Though inſolvent, we're honeſt, and give up our all.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

MEN.

Sir JOHN RESTLESS,	Mr. YATES.
BEVERLEY,	Mr. O'BRIEN.
Sir WILLIAM BELLMONT,	Mr. BURTON.
Young BELLMONT,	Mr. PACKER.
BLANDFORD,	Mr. BRANSBY.
ROBERT, Servant to Sir JOHN,	Mr. BLAKES.
BRUSH, Servant to BEVERLY,	Mr. WESTON.

WOMEN.

Lady RESTLESS,	Miſs HAUGHTON.
BELINDA,	Mrs. YATES.
CLARISSA,	Mrs. PALMER.
TATTLE,	Mrs. BRADSHAW.
TIPPET,	Miſs HIPPISLEY.
MARMALET,	Miſs MILLS.

All in the Wrong.

A COMEDY.

ACT the FIRST.

SCENE *the* PARK:

Enter Sir JOHN RESTLESS *and* ROBERT, *from a houſe in the ſide ſcene.*

Sir JOHN.

SIR John Reſtleſs! Sir John Reſtleſs! thou haſt played the fool with a vengeance. What devil whiſpered thee to marry ſuch a woman? —— Robert, you have been a faithful ſervant, and I value you. Did your lady go out at this door here into the park, or did ſhe go out at the ſtreet door?

ROBERT,

This door, Sir.

Sir

Sir JOHN.

Robert, I will never live in a houſe again that has two doors to it.

ROBERT.

Sir!

Sir JOHN.

I will give warning to my landlord inſtantly. The eyes of Argus are not ſufficient to watch the motions of a wife, where there is a ſtreet door, and a back door, to favour her eſcapes.

ROBERT.

Upon my word, Sir, I wiſh—you will pardon my boldneſs, Sir,—I wiſh you would ſhake off this uneaſineſs that preys upon your ſpirits. It grieves me to the heart,—it does, indeed, Sir, to ſee you in this way: baniſh your ſuſpicions: you have conceived ſome ſtrange averſion, I am afraid, to my lady, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

No, Robert; no averſion: in ſpite of me I doat upon her ſtill.

ROBERT.

Then why will you not think generouſly, Sir, of the perſon you love? My lady, I dare be ſworn—

Sir JOHN.

Is falſe to me. That embitters my whole life. I love her, and ſhe repays me with ingratitude, with perfidy, with falſehood, with——

Ro-

ROBERT.

I dare be ſworn, Sir, ſhe is a woman of honour.

Sir JOHN.

Robert, I have conſidered you as a friend in my houſe: don't you betray me too: don't attempt to juſtify her.

ROBERT.

Dear Sir, if you will but give me leave: you have been anindulgent maſter to me, and I am only concerned for your welfare. You married my lady for love, and I have heard you ſo warm in her praiſe: why will you go back from thoſe ſentiments?

Sir JOHN:

Yes, I married her for love—Oh! love! love! what miſchief doſt thou not occaſion in this world? Yes, Robert, I married her for love. When firſt I ſaw her, I was not ſo much ſtruck with her beauty, as with that air of an ingenuous mind that appeared in her countenance; her features did not ſo much charm me with their ſymmetry, as that expreſſion of ſweetneſs, that ſmile that indicated affability, modeſty, and compliance. But, honeſt Robert, I was deceived: I was not a month married, when I ſaw her practiſing thoſe very ſmiles at her glaſs: I ſaw through the artifice; plainly ſaw there was nothing natural in her manner, but all forced, all ſtudied, put on with her head-dreſs: I was alarmed; I reſolved to watch her from that moment, and I have ſeen ſuch things!

Ro-

ROBERT.

Upon my word, Sir, I believe you wrong her, and wrong yourſelf: you build on groundleſs ſurmizes; you make yourſelf unhappy, and my lady too; and by being conſtantly uneaſy, and never ſhewing her the leaſt love, you'll forgive me, Sir,—you fill her mind with ſtrange ſuſpicions, and ſo the miſchief is done.

Sir JOHN.

Suſpicions, Robert?

ROBERT.

Yes, Sir, ſtrange ſuſpicions!—My lady finds herſelf treated with no degree of tenderneſs; ſhe infers that your inclinations are fixed elſewhere, and ſo ſhe is become—you will pardon my blunt honeſty—ſhe is become downright jealous,—as jealous as yourſelf, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

Oh! Robert, you are little read in the arts of women; you little know the intricacies of their conduct; the mazes through which they walk, ſhifting, turning, winding, running into devious paths, but tending all through a labyrinth to the temple of Venus. You cannot ſee, that all her pretences to ſuſpect me of infidelity are merely a counter-plot to cover her own looſe deſigns: it is but a gauze covering, though; it is ſeen through, and only ſerves to ſhew her guilt the more.

ROBERT.

Upon my word, Sir John, I cannot ſee——

Sir

Sir JOHN.

No, Robert; I know you can't. Her ſuſpicions of me all make againſt her; they are female ſtratagems, and yet it is but too true that ſhe ſtill is near my heart. Oh! Robert, Robert, when I have watched her at a play, or elſewhere; when I have counted her oglings, and her whiſperings, her ſtolen glances, and her artful leer, with the cunning of her ſex, ſhe has pretended to be as watchful of me: diſſembling, falſe, deceitful woman!

ROBERT.

And yet, I dare aſſure you——

Sir JOHN.

No more; I am not to be deceived; I know her thoroughly, and now,—now—has not ſhe eſcaped out of my houſe, even now?

ROBERT.

But with no bad deſign.

Sir JOHN.

I am the beſt judge of that: which way did ſhe go?

ROBERT.

Acroſs the Park, Sir; that way, towards the Horſe-guards.

Sir JOHN.

Towards the Horſe-guards!——there,—there,—there, the thing is evident: you may go in, Robert.

Ro-

ROBERT.

Indeed, Sir, I——

Sir JOHN.

Go in, I ſay; go in.

ROBERT.

There is no perſuading him to his own good.
[*Exit.*

Sir JOHN *alone*

Gone towards the Horſe-guards! my head aches; my forehead burns; I am cuttting my horns. Gone towards the Horſe-guards!—I'll purſue her thither; if I find her, the time, the place, all will inform againſt her. Sir John! Sir John; you were a madman to marry ſuch a woman. [*Exit.*

Enter BEVERLEY *and* BELLMONT, *at oppoſite ſides.*

BEVERLEY.

Ha! my dear Bellmont? A fellow ſufferer in love is a companion well met.

BELLMONT.

Beverley! I rejoice to ſee you.

BEVERLEY.

Well! I ſuppoſe the ſame cauſe has brought us both into the park: both come to ſigh our amorous vows in the friendly gloom of yonder walk. Belinda keeps a perpetual war of love and grief, and hope and fear in my heart: and let me ſee—(*lays his hand on*

on Bellmont's breaſt) how fares all here? I fancy my ſiſter is a little buſy with you.

BELLMONT.

Buſy! ſhe makes a perfect riot there. Not one wink the whole night. Oh! Clariſſa, her form ſo animated! her eyes ſo——

BEVERLEY.

Prithee! truce; I have not leiſure to attend to her praiſe: a ſiſter's praiſe too! the greateſt merit I ever could ſee in Clariſſa is, that ſhe loves you freely and ſincerely.

BELLMONT.

And to be even with you, Sir, your Belinda! upon my ſoul, notwithſtanding all your laviſh praiſes, her higheſt perfection, in my mind, is her ſenſibility to the merit of my friend.

BEVERLEY.

Oh! Bellmont! ſuch a girl!
Scarce can I to heav'n excuſe
The devotion which I uſe
Unto that adored dame!
But tell me honeſtly now, do you think ſhe has ever betrayed the leaſt regard for me?

BELLMONT.

How can you, who have ſuch convincing proofs, how can you aſk ſuch a queſtion? That uneaſineſs of yours, that inquietude of mind——

BEVERLEY.

Prithee don't fix that character upon me.

BELLMONT.

It is your character, my dear Beverley: inſtead of enjoying the object before you, you are ever looking back to ſomething paſt, or conjecturing about ſomething to come, and are your own ſelf tormentor.

BEVERLEY.

No, no, no; don't be ſo ſevere: I hate the very notion of ſuch a temper: the thing is, when a man loves tenderly as I do, ſollicitude and anxiety are natural; and when Belinda's father oppoſes my warmeſt wiſhes——

BELLMONT.

Why yes, the good Mr. Blandford is willing to give her in marriage to me.

BEVERLEY.

The ſenſeleſs old dotard!

BELLMONT.

Thank you for the compliment! and my father, the wiſe Sir William Bellmont——

BEVERLEY.

Is a tyrannical, poſitive, headſtrong——

BELLMONT.

There again I thank you. But in ſhort the old couple, Belinda's father and mine, have both agreed upon the match. They inſiſt upon compliance from their children; ſo that according to their wiſe heads, I am to be married off-hand to Belinda, and you and your

your ſiſter, poor Clariſſa, are to be left to ſhift for yourſelves.

BEVERLEY.

Racks and torment!

BELLMONT.

Racks and torment!—Seas of milk and ſhips of amber, man!—We are ſailing to our wiſhed for harbour, in ſpite of their machinations. I have ſettled the whole affair with Clariſſa.

BEVERLEY.

Have you?

BELLMONT.

I have, and to-morrow morning makes me poſſeſſor of her charms.

BEVERLEY.

My dear boy give us your hand: and then, thou dear rogue, and then Belinda's mine! *Loll-toll-loll*—

BELLMONT.

Well may you be in raptures, Sir; for here, here, here they both come.

Enter BELINDA, *and* CLARISSA.

BEVERLEY.

Grace was in all her ſteps; heav'n in her eye;
In every geſture dignity and love.——

BELINDA.

A poetical reception truly!—But can't your paſſion inſpire you to a compoſition of your own, Mr. Beverley?

BEVERLEY.

It inſpires me with ſentiments, Madam, which I can't find words to expreſs. Suckling, Waller, Landſdown, and all our dealers in love-verſes, give but a faint image of a heart touched like mine.

BELINDA.

Poor gentleman! what a terrible taking you are in! But if the ſonneteers cannot give an image of you, Sir, have you had recourſe to a painter, as you promiſed me?

BEVERLEY.

I have, Belinda, and here,——here is the humble portrait of your adorer.

BELINDA. (*takes the picture*)

Well! there is a likeneſs; but after all, there is a better painter than this gentleman, whoever he be.

BEVERLEY.

A better!——now ſhe is diſcontented. (*aſide*) Where, Madam, can a better be found?——If money can purchaſe him——

BELINDA.

Oh! Sir, when he draws for money he never ſucceeds. But when pure inclination prompts him, then

then his colouring is warm indeed. He gives a portrait that endears the original.—

BEVERLEY.

Such an artiſt is worth the Indies!

BELINDA.

You need not go ſo far to ſeek him: he has done your buſineſs already. The limner I mean is a certain little blind god, called Love, and he has ſtamped ſuch an impreſſion of you here—

BEVERLEY.

Madam, your moſt obedient: and I can tell you, that the very ſame gentleman has been at work for you too.——

BELLMONT.

(*who had been talking apart with Clariſſa*)

Oh! he has had a world of buſineſs upon his hands, for we two have been agreeing what havock he has made with us.

CLARISSA.

Yes, but we are but in a kind of fool's paradiſe here: all our ſchemes are but mere caſtle-building, which your father, Mr. Bellmont, and my dear Belinda,—yours too are moſt obſtinately determined to deſtroy.

BELLMONT.

Why, as you ſay, they are determined that I ſhall have the honour of Belinda's hand in the country-dance of matrimony.

BELINDA.

Without conſidering that I may like another partner better.

BEVERLEY.

And without conſidering that I, forlorn as I am, and my ſiſter, there—who is as well inclined to a matrimonial game of romps as any girl in Chriſtendom, muſt both of us ſit down, and bind our brows with willow, in ſpite of our ſtrongeſt inclinations to mingle in the groupe.

BELLMONT.

But we have planned our own happineſs, and with a little reſolution we ſhall be ſucceſsful in the end I warrant you. Clariſſa, let us take a turn this way, and leave that love-ſick pair to themſelves: they are only fit company for each other, and we may find wherewithal to entertain ourſelves.

CLARISSA.

Let us try: turn this way.

BELINDA.

Are you going to leave us, Clariſſa?

CLARISSA.

Only juſt ſauntering into this ſide-walk: we ſhan't loſe one another.

BELINDA.

You are ſuch a tender couple! you are not tired I ſee

I ſee of ſaying pretty ſoft things to each other. Well! well! take your own way.

CLARISSA.

And if I gueſs right, you are glad to be left together.

BELINDA.

Who I?

CLARISSA.

Yes, you; the coy Belinda!

BELINDA.

Not I truly: let us walk together.

CLARISSA.

No, no, by no means: you ſhall be indulged. Adieu!—we ſhall be within call.

[*Exeunt* Bellmont *and* Clariſſa.

BEVERLEY.

My ſiſter is generouſly in love with Bellmont: I wiſh Belinda would act as openly towards me. (*aſide*)

BELINDA.

Well, Sir!—Thoughtful! I'll call Mr. Bellmont back, if that is the caſe.

BEVERLEY.

She will call him back. (*aſide*)

BELINDA.

Am I to entertain you, or you me?

BEVERLEY.

Madam!

BELINDA.

Madam!—ha! ha! why you look as if you were frightened: are you afraid of being left alone with me?

BEVERLEY.

Oh! Belinda, you know that is the happineſs of my life;—but——

BELINDA.

But what, Sir?

BEVERLEY.

Have I done any thing to offend you?

BELINDA.

To offend me?

BEVERLEY.

I ſhould have been of the party laſt night; I own I ſhould; it was a ſufficient inducement to me that you was to be there; it was my fault, and you I ſee are piqued at it.

BELINDA.

I piqued!

BEVERLEY.

I ſee you are; and the company perceived it laſt night.

night. I have heard it all: in mere resentment you directed all your discourse to Mr. Bellmont.

BELINDA.

If I did it was merely accidental.

BEVERLEY.

No, it was deliberately done: forgive my rash folly in refusing the invitation: I meant no manner of harm.

BELINDA.

Who imagines you did, Sir?——

BEVERLEY.

I beg your pardon, Belinda: you take offence too lighty.

BELINDA.

Ha! ha! what have you taken into your head now? This uneasiness is of your own making: I have taken nothing ill, Sir.

BEVERLEY.

You could not but take it ill; but by all that's amiable about you, I meant not to incur your displeasure: forgive that abrupt answer I sent: I should have made a handsomer apology.

BELINDA.

Apology!—you was engaged, was not you?

BEVERLEY.

I said so; I own it, and beg your pardon——

BE-

BELINDA.

Beg my pardon! for what? Ha! ha!

BEVERLEY.

I only meant——

BELINDA.

Ha! ha! can you think I ſee any thing in your meſſage to be offended at, Sir?

BEVERLEY.

I was wrong: I beg your pardon. Where you were concerned, I own I ſhould have expreſſed myſelf with more delicacy, than thoſe haſty words, I am engaged, and can't wait upon you to-night. I ſhould have told you that my heart was with you, though neceſſity dragged me another way: this omiſſion you reſented. I could learn, ſince, what ſpirits you were in the whole evening, though I enjoyed nothing in your abſence. I could hear the ſallies of your wit, the ſprightlineſs of your converſation, and on whom your eyes were fixed the whole night.

BELINDA.

They were fixed upon Mr. Bellmont, you think!

BEVERLEY.

Ay! and fixed with delight upon him, negociating the buſineſs of love before the whole company.

BELINDA.

Upon my word, Sir, whoever is your author, you are

are misinformed. You alarm me with these fancies, and you know I have often told you that you are of too refining a temper: you create for yourself imaginary misunderstandings, and then are ever entering into explanations. But this watching for intelligence, from the spies and misrepresenters of conversation, betrays strong symptoms of jealousy. I would not be married to a jealous man for the world.

BEVERLEY.

Now she's seeking occasion to break off. (*aside*) Jealousy, Ma'am, can never get admission into my breast. I am of too generous a temper: a certain delicacy I own I have; I value the opinion of my friends, and when there are circumstances of a doubtful aspect, I am glad to set things in their true light. And if I do so with others, surely with you, on whom my happiness depends, to desire a favourable interpretation of my words and actions cannot be improper.

BELINDA.

But these little humours may grow up, and gather into the fixed disease of jealousy at last. (*Lady Restless crosses the stage, and rings a bell at the door*) And there now,—there goes a lady who is a victim to her own fretful imagination.

BEVERLEY.

Who is the lady pray?——

BELINDA.

My Lady Restless. Walk this way, and I will give you her whole character. I am not acquainted with her Ladyship, but I have heard much of her. This way. [*Exeunt Belinda and Beverley.*

Lady

Lady RESTLESS. (*ringing at the door*)

What do theſe ſervants mean? There is ſomething going forward here. I will be let in, or I will know the reaſon why. (*rings again*) But in the mean time, Sir John can let any body he pleaſes out at the ſtreet door: I'll run up the ſteps here, and obſerve. [*Exit.*

TATTLE *opens the door,* MARMALET *follows her.*

TATTLE.

Who rung this bell?—I don't ſee any body; and yet I am ſure the bell rung. Well, Mrs. Marmalet you will be going, I ſee.

MARMALET.

Yes, Mrs. Tattle; I am obliged to leave you. I'll ſtep acroſs the Park, and I ſhall ſoon reach Groſvenor Square. When ſhall I ſee you at our houſe?

TATTLE.

Heaven knows when I ſhall be able to get out: my Lady leads us all ſuch lives! I wiſh I had ſuch another place as you have of it.

MARMALET.

I have nothing to complain of.

TATTLE.

No, that you have not: when ſhall I get ſuch a gown as that you have on by my Lady? She will never fling off ſuch a thing, and give it to a poor ſervant? Worry, worry, worry herſelf, and every body elſe too.

Re-

Re-enter Lady RESTLESS.

Lady RESTLESS.

No; there is nobody ſtirring that way. What do I ſee? A huſſy coming out of my houſe!

MARMALET.

Well, I muſt begone, Mrs. Tattle: fare you well.

Lady RESTLESS.

She is dizened out too! why did not you open the door, Tattle, when I rung?

TATTLE.

I came as ſoon as poſſible, Madam.

Lady RESTLESS.

Who have you with you here? What is your buſineſs, miſtreſs? (*to Marmalet*)

MARMALET.

My buſineſs, Madam!

Lady RESTLESS.

In confuſion too! The caſe is plain. You come here after Sir John, I ſuppoſe.

MARMALET.

I come after Sir John, Madam!

Lady RESTLESS.

Guilt in her face! yes, after Sir John: and, Tattle,

Tattle, you are in the plot againſt me; you were favouring her eſcape, were you?

TATTLE.

I favour her eſcape, Madam! What occaſion for that? This is Mrs. Marmalet, Madam, an acquaintance of mine, Madam, as good a kind of body as any at all.

Lady RESTLESS.

Oh! very fine, miſtreſs! you bring your creatures after the vile man, do you?

MARMALET.

I aſſure you, Madam, I am a very honeſt girl.

Lady RESTLESS.

Oh! I dare ſay ſo. Where did you get that gown?

MARMALET.

La! Ma'am! I came by it honeſtly, my Lady Conqueſt gave it to me. I live with my Lady Conqueſt, Madam.

Lady RESTLESS.

What a complexion ſhe has! How long have you lived in London?

MARMALET.

Three years, Madam.

Lady RESTLESS.

In London three years with that complexion! it can't

can't be: perhaps ſhe is painted: all theſe creatures paint. You are all ſo many painted dolls. (*rubs her face with a white handkerchief*) No, it does not come off. So, Mrs. Tattle, you bring your freſh country girls here to my houſe, do you?

TATTLE.

Upon my credit, Ma'am——

Lady RESTLESS.

Don't tell me: I ſee through this affair. Go you about your buſineſs, miſtreſs, and let me never ſee you about my doors again: go, go your ways.

MARMALET.

Lord, Ma'am, I ſhan't trouble your houſe. Mrs. Tattle, a good day. Here's a deal to-do, indeed! I have as good a houſe as her's to go to, whatever ſhe may think of herſelf. [*Exit.*

Lady RESTLESS.

There, there, there; ſee there; ſhe goes off in a huff! the way with them all. Ay! I ſee how it is, Tattle: you falſe, ungrateful—that gown was never given her by a woman, ſhe had that from Sir John. Where is Sir John?

TATTLE.

Sir John an't at home, Ma'am.

Lady RESTLESS.

Where is he? Where is he gone? When did he go out?

TATTLE.

TATTLE.

I really don't know, Ma'am.

Lady RESTLESS.

Tattle, I know you fib now. But I'll ſift this to the bottom. I'll write to my Lady Conqueſt to know the truth about that girl that was here but now.

TATTLE.

You will find I told you truth, Madam.

Lady RESTLESS.

Very well, Mrs. Pert. I'll go and write this moment. Send Robert, to give me an account of his maſter. Sir John, Sir John, you will diſtract me.

[*Exit.*

Re-enter BELINDA *and* BEVERLEY.

BELINDA.

Ay! but that quickneſs, that extreme ſenſibility is what I am afraid of. I poſitively would not have a jealous huſband for the world.

BEVERLEY.

By heaven! no earthly circumſtance ſhall ever make me think injuriouſly of you. Jealouſy!—ha! ha!—it is the moſt ridiculous paſſion!——ha! ha!

BELINDA.

You may laugh, Sir; but I know your over-refining temper too well, and I abſolutely will have it in

in our marriage-articles, that I muſt not be plagued with your ſuſpicions.

BEVERLEY.

I ſubſcribe, Ma'am.

BELINDA.

I will have no enquiries where I am going to viſit; no following me from place to place: and if we ſhould chance to meet, and you ſhould perceive a man of wit, or a pretty fellow, ſpeaking to me, I will not have you fidgetting about on your chair, knitting your brow, and looking at your watch—"My "dear, is it not time to go home?—my love, the "coach is waiting:"—and then, if you are prevailed upon to ſtay, I will not have you converſe with a "Yes, Sir," and a "No, Sir," for the reſt of the evening, and then wrangle with me in the carriage all the way home, and not be commonly civil to me for the reſt of the night. I poſitively will have none of this.

BEVERLEY.

Agreed, Ma'am, agreed——

BELINDA.

And you ſhan't tell me you are going out of town, and then ſteal privately to the play, or to Ranelagh, merely to be a ſpy upon me. I poſitively will admit no curioſity about my letters. If you were to open a letter of mine, I ſhould never forgive you. I do verily believe, if you were to open my letters I ſhould hate you.

BEVERLEY.

I ſubſcribe to every thing you can aſk. You ſhall have what female friends you pleaſe; loſe your money to whom you pleaſe; dance with what beau you pleaſe; ride out with whom you pleaſe; go to what china-ſhop you pleaſe; and, in ſhort, do what you pleaſe, without my attempting to bribe your footman, or your maid for ſecret intelligence.

BELINDA.

Oh! Lud! Oh! Lud! that is in the very ſtrain of jealouſy. Deliver me! there is my father yonder, and Sir William Bellmont with him. Fly this inſtant, fly, Mr. Beverley, down that walk; any where.

BEVERLEY.

You promiſe then——

BELINDA.

Don't talk to me now: what would you be at? I am yours, and only yours; unalterably ſo. Fly—begone, leave me this moment.

BEVERLEY.

I obey; I am gone. [*Exit.*

BELINDA.

Now are they putting their wiſe heads together to thwart all my ſchemes of happineſs: but love, imperious love, will have it otherwiſe.

Enter

Enter Mr. BLANDFORD *and* Sir WILLIAM BELLMONT.

Mr. BLANDFORD.

Sir William, ſince we have agreed upon every thing——

Sir WILLIAM.

Why yes, Mr. Blandford, I think every thing is ſettled.

Mr. BLANDFORD.

Why then we have only to acquaint the young people with our intentions, and ſo conclude the affair without delay.

Sir WILLIAM.

That is all, Sir.

Mr. BLANDFORD.

As to my girl, I don't mind her nonſenſe about Beverley: ſhe muſt do as I will have her.

Sir WILLIAM.

And my ſon too, he muſt follow my directions. At to his telling me of his love for Clariſſa, it is all a joke with me. Children muſt do as their parents will have them.

Mr. BLANDFORD.

Ay! ſo they muſt; and ſo they ſhall. Hey! here is my daughter. So Belinda!——Well, my girl, Sir William and I have agreed, and you are to prepare for marriage, that's all.

BELINDA.

With Mr. Beverley, Sir?

BLANDFORD.

Mr. Beverley!

BELINDA.

You know you encouraged him yourſelf, Sir.

BLANDFORD.

Well, well! I have changed my mind on that head: my friend, Sir William, here offers you his ſon. Do as I adviſe you: have a care, Belinda, how you diſobey my commands.

BELINDA.

But, Sir——

BLANDFORD.

But, Madam, I muſt and will be obeyed. You don't like him, you ſay: but I like him, and that's ſufficient for you.

Sir WILLIAM.

And ſo it is, Mr. Blandford. If my ſon pretended to have a will of his own, I ſhould let him know to the contrary.

BELINDA.

And can you, Sir William, againſt our inclination force us both?

BLANDFORD.

Hold your tongue, Belinda; don't provoke me. What makes you from home? Go your ways back directly, and ſettle your mind. I tell you once for all I will have my own way. Come, Sir William, we will ſtep to the lawyer's chambers. Go home, Belinda, and be obſervant of my commands. Come, Sir William. What did you ſay? (*to Belinda*) You mutiny, do you? Don't provoke me. You know, Belinda, I am an odd ſort of a man when provok'd. Look ye here: mind what I ſay; I won't reaſon with you about the matter; my power is abſolute, and if you offer to rebel, you ſhall have no huſband at all with my conſent. I'll cut you off with a ſhilling; I'll ſee you ſtarve; beg an alms; live miſerable; die wretched; in ſhort, ſuffer any calamity without the leaſt compaſſion from me. If I find you an undutiful girl, I caſt you off for ever. So there's one word for all. [*Exit: Sir William follows him.*

BELINDA.

What will become of me?——his inhumanity overcomes me quite—I can never conſent: the very ſight of this picture is enough to forbid it. Oh! Beverley, you are maſter of my heart. I'll go this inſtant —and—heavens! I can ſcarce move. I am ready to faint.

Enter Sir JOHN.

Sir JOHN.

No tidings of her far or near.

BELINDA.

How I tremble!—I ſhall fall—no help?

Sir JOHN.

What do I ſee!—a young lady in diſtreſs!

BELINDA.

Oh!——*(faints in his arms, and drops the picture.)*

Sir JOHN.

She is fallen into a fit. Would my ſervants were in the way.

Lady RESTLESS. *(at her window.)*

Lady RESTLESS.

Where can this barbarous man be gone to?—How!—under my very window!

Sir JOHN.

How cold ſhe is!—quite cold—*(lays his hand to her cheek)*

Lady RESTLESS.

How familiar he is with her!

Sir JOHN.

And yet ſhe looks beautiful ſtill.

Lady RESTLESS.

Does ſhe ſo?

Sir

Sir JOHN.

Her eyes open—how lovely they look!

Lady RESTLESS.

Traitor!

Sir JOHN.

Her cheek begins to colour. Well, young lady, how fare you now, my dear?

Lady RESTLESS.

My dear too!

BELINDA.

Heavens! where am I?—

Sir JOHN.

Repoſe yourſelf awhile, or will you ſtep into my houſe?

Lady RESTLESS.

No, truly, ſhan't ſhe. Vile man! but I will ſpoil your ſport. I will come down to you directly, and flaſh confuſion in your face. [*Exit from above.*

Sir JOHN.

Where do you live, Madam?

BELINDA.

In Queen's-ſquare, Sir, by the ſide of the Park.

Sir JOHN.

I will wait upon you: truſt yourſelf with me. You look much better now. Lean on my arm. There, there, I will conduct you. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Lady RESTLESS.

Lady RESTLESS.

Now I'll make one among ye. How! fled! gone! which way? Is not that he, yonder?—No—he went into my houſe, I dare ſay, as I came down ſtairs. Tattle, Tattle, Robert. Will no body anſwer?

Enter TATTLE.

Lady RESTLESS.

Where is Sir John?

TATTLE.

La! Ma'am, how ſhould I know?

Lady RESTLESS.

Did not he go in this moment?

TATTLE.

No, Ma'am.

Lady RESTLESS.

To be ſure you will ſay ſo. I'll follow him through the world, or I'll find him out. So, ſo,—what is here?—This is her picture, I ſuppoſe. I will make ſure of this at leaſt: this will diſcover her to me, tho'

tho' ſhe has eſcaped now. Cruel, falſe, deceitful man! [*Exit.*

TATTLE.

Poor lady! I believe her head is turned, for my part. Well! I am determined I'll look out for another place, that's a ſure thing I will.

End of the FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT the SECOND.

Scene Sir JOHN's *Houſe.*

Enter Sir JOHN *and* ROBERT.

Sir JOHN.

ROBERT, where is your lady?

ROBERT.

In her own room, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

Any body with her?

ROBERT.

I can't ſay, Sir: my lady is not well.

Sir JOHN.

Not well! fatigued with rioting about this town, I ſuppoſe. How long has ſhe been at home?

ROBERT.

About an hour, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

About an hour!—very well, Robert, you may retire. (*Exit Robert*) Now will I queſtion her cloſely. So—ſo—ſo—ſhe comes, leaning on her maid: finely diſſembled! finely diſſembled! But this pretended illneſs

illneſs ſhall not ſhelter her from my ſtrict enquiry. Soft a moment! If I could overhear what paſſes between 'em, it might lead to the truth. I'll work by ſtratagem. The hypocrite! how ſhe acts her part! [*Exit.*

Enter Lady RESTLESS *and* TATTLE.

TATTLE.

How are you now, Madam?

LADY RESTLESS.

Somewhat better, Tattle. Reach that chair. Tattle, tell me honeſtly, does that girl live with Lady Conqueſt?

TATTLE.

She does, Madam, upon my veracity.

Lady RESTLESS.

Very well! you will be obſtinate, I ſee, but I ſhall know the truth preſently. I ſhall have an anſwer from her Ladyſhip, and then all will come out.

TATTLE.

You will hear nothing, Ma'am, but what I have told you already.

Lady RESTLESS.

Tattle, Tattle, I took you up in the country in hopes gratitude would make you my friend. But you are as bad as the reſt of them. Conceal all you know: it is of very little conſequence. I now ſee through the whole affair. Though it is the picture of a man, yet I am not to be deceived: I underſtand it all. This is ſome former gallant: the creature gave this

this to Sir John as a proof that she had no affection for any one but himself. What art he must have had to induce her to this!—I have found him out at last.

Sir JOHN. *(peeping in)*

Sir JOHN.

What does she say?

Lady RESTLESS.

I have seen enough to convince me what kind of man he is. The fate of us poor women is hard: we all wish for husbands, and they are the torment of our lives.

TATTLE.

There is too much truth in what you say, Ma'am.

Sir JOHN.

You join her, do you, Mrs. Iniquity?

Lady RESTLESS.

What a pity it is, Tattle, that poor women should be under severer restraints than the men are!

Sir JOHN.

You repine for want of freedom, do you?

Lady RESTLESS.

Cruel laws of wedlock! The tyrant-husband may triumph in his infidelity. He may securely trample upon all laws of decency and order: it redounds to his credit; gives him a fashionable air of vice, while a poor woman is obliged to submit to his cruelty. She remains

remains tied to him for life, even though ſhe has reaſon to entertain a mortal hatred for him.

Sir JOHN.

Oh! very well argued, Madam!

Lady RESTLESS.

What a pity it is, Tattle, that we cannot change our huſbands, as we do our ear-rings or our gloves!

Sir JOHN.

There is a woman of ſpirit!

Lady RESTLESS.

Tattle! will you own the truth to me about that girl?

TATTLE.

I really have told you the truth, Madam.

Lady RESTLESS.

You won't diſcover, I ſee: very well! you may go down ſtairs.

TATTLE.

I aſſure your Ladyſhip——

Lady RESTLESS.

Go down ſtairs.

TATTLE.

Yes, Ma'am.

Lady Restless.

Would I had never ſeen my huſband's face!

Sir John.

I am even with you: I have as good wiſhes for you, I aſſure you.

Lady Restless.

This picture here—Oh the baſe man!

Sir John.

The picture of her gallant, I ſuppoſe.

Lady Restless.

This is really a handſome picture: what a charming countenance! it is perfumed I fancy: the ſcent is agreeable.

Sir John.

The jade, how eagerly ſhe kiſſes it!

Lady Restless.

Why had I not ſuch a dear, dear man, inſtead of the brute, the monſter——

Sir John.

Monſter!—She does not mince the matter: plain downright Engliſh! I muſt contain my rage, and ſteal upon her meditations—So—ſo—ſo—[*Enters on tiptoe.*

Lady Restless.

There is no falſhood in this look.

Sir

Sir JOHN (*looking over her ſhoulder.*)

Oh! what a handſome dog ſhe has choſen for herſelf!

Lady RESTLESS.

With you, I could be for ever happy!

Sir JOHN.

You could, could you? (*Snatches the picture.*)

Lady RESTLESS. (*ſcreams out.*)

Mercy on me!—Oh! is it you, Sir?

Sir JOHN.

Now, Madam, now falſe one, have I caught you?

Lady RESTLESS.

You are come home at laſt, I find, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

My Lady Reſtleſs, my Lady Reſtleſs, what can you ſay for yourſelf now?

Lady RESTLESS.

What can I ſay for myſelf, Sir John?

Sir JOHN.

Ay! Madam! this picture——

Lady RESTLESS.

Yes, Sir, that picture!

Sir

Sir JOHN.

Will be evidence——

Lady RESTLESS.

Of your ſhame, Sir John.

Sir JOHN.

Of my ſhame!—'tis very true what ſhe ſays: yes, Madam, it will be an evidence of my ſhame; I feel that but too ſenſibly. But on your part——

Lady RESTELSS.

You own it then, do you?——

Sir JOHN.

Own it! I muſt own it, Madam; though confuſion cover me, I muſt own it: it is what you have deſerved at my hands.

Lady RESTLESS.

I deſerve it, Sir John! find excuſes if you will. Cruel, cruel man!——to make me this return at laſt. I cannot bear it. Oh! oh! (*cries*) Such black injuſtice!

Sir JOHN.

You may weep; but your tears are loſt: they fall without effect. I now renounce you for ever. This picture will juſtify me to the wide world; it will ſhew what a baſe woman you have been.

Lady

Lady Restless.

What does the man mean?

Sir John.

The picture of your gallant, Madam! the darling of your amorous hours, who gratifies your luxurious appetites abroad, and——

Lady Restless.

Scurrilous wretch! Oh! Sir, you are at your old ſtratagem I find: recrimination, you think, will ſerve your turn.

Sir John.

It is a pity, you know, Madam, that a woman ſhould be tied to a man for life, even though ſhe has a mortal hatred for him.

Lady Restless.

Artful hypocrite!

Sir John.

That ſhe can't change her huſband as ſhe does her ear-rings or her gloves.

Lady Restless.

Sir John, this is your old device: this won't avail you.

Sir John.

Had the original of this fallen to your lot, you could kiſs the picture for ever. You can gloat upon it, Madam, glue your very lips to it.

Lady RESTLESS.

Shallow artifice!

Sir JOHN.

With him you could be for ever happy.

Lady RESTLESS.

This is all in vain, Sir John.

Sir JOHN.

Had ſuch a dear, dear man fallen to your lot, inſtead of the brute, the monſter—Am I a monſter? I am, and you have made me ſo. The world ſhall know your infamy.

Lady RESTLESS.

Oh! brave it out, Sir, brave it out to the laſt: harmleſs, innocent man! you have nothing to bluſh for, nothing to be aſhamed of: you have no intrigues, no private amours abroad. I have not ſeen any thing, not I.

Sir JOHN.

Madam, I have ſeen, and I now ſee your paramour.

Lady RESTLESS.

That air of confidence will be of great uſe to you, Sir. You have no convenient to meet you under my very window, to loll ſoftly in your arms!

Sir JOHN.

Hey! how!

Lady

Lady RESTLESS.

Her arm thrown careleſsly round your neck! Your hand tenderly applied to her cheek.

Sir JOHN.

'Sdeath! that's unlucky—ſhe will turn it againſt me. (*aſide*)

Lady RESTLESS.

You are in confuſion, are you, Sir? But why ſhould you? You meant no harm—" You are ſafe " with me, my dear—will you ſtep into my houſe, " my love?"—Yes, Sir, you would fain bring her into my very houſe.

Sir JOHN.

My Lady Reſtleſs, this evaſion is mean and paultry. You beheld a young lady in diſtreſs.

Lady RESTLESS.

I know it, and you, tender-hearted man, could careſs her out of mere compaſſion: you could gaze wantonly out of charity; from pure benevolence of diſpoſition you could convey her to ſome convenient dwelling. Oh! Sir John, Sir John!

Sir JOHN.

Madam, this well acted paſſion——

Lady RESTLESS.

Don't imagine ſhe has eſcaped me, Sir.

Sir JOHN:

You may talk and rave, Ma'am; but depend upon it, I ſhall ſpare no pains to do myſelf juſtice on this occaſion. Nor will I reſt till——

Lady RESTLESS.

Oh! fie upon you, Sir John: theſe artifices——

Sir JOHN.

Nor will I reſt, Madam, until I have found, by means of this inſtrument here in my hand, who your darling is. I will go about it ſtreight. Ungrateful, treacherous woman! [*Exit.*

Lady RESTLESS.

Yes, go, under that pretext, in purſuit of your licentious pleaſures. This ever has been his ſcheme to cloak his wicked practices: abandoned man! to face me down too, after what my eyes ſo plainly beheld! I wiſh I could wring that ſecret out of Tattle. I'll ſtep to my own room directly, and try by menaces, by wheedling, by fair means, by foul means, by every means, to wreſt it from her. [*Exit.*

Scene the Park.

Enter Sir JOHN *and* ROBERT.

Sir JOHN.

Come hither, Robert. Look at this picture.

Ro-

ROBERT.

Yes, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

Let me watch his countenance. Well! well! doſt thou know it, Robert?

ROBERT.

'Tis a mighty handſome picture, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

A handſome picture!—(*aſide*)

ROBERT.

The fineſt lady in the land need not deſire a handſomer man, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

How well he knows the purpoſes of it!—Well! well! honeſt Robert, tell me: well—who is it?—tell me.

ROBERT.

Sir!

Sir JOHN.

You know whoſe picture it is: I know you do. Well! well! who—who—who is it?

ROBERT.

Upon my word, Sir, it is more than I can tell.

Sir JOHN.

Not know! I am convinced you do. So own the truth: don't be a villian; don't.

ROBERT.

As I am an honeſt man, Sir——

Sir JOHN.

Be an honeſt man then, and tell me. Did you never ſee ſuch a ſmooth faced, fiery eyed, warm-complexioned, taper young fellow here about my houſe?

ROBERT.

Never, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

Not with my wife!—to drink chocolate of a morning, tea of an evening? Come, honeſt Robert, I'll give you a leaſe of a good farm. What ſay you? A leaſe for your life—well! well!—you may take your wife's life into the bargain. Well!

ROBERT.

Believe me, Sir John, I never ſaw——

Sir JOHN.

I'll add your child's life. Come ſpeak out—your own life, your wife's life, and your child's! now! now! a leaſe for three lives! Now, Robert!

ROBERT.

As I hope for mercy I never ſaw any ſuch a gentleman.

Sir JOHN.

Robert, Robert, you are bribed by my wife.

ROBERT.

No, as I am a ſinner, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

And the worſt of ſinners you will be, if you are a confederate in this plot againſt my peace and honour. Reflect on that, Robert.

Enter a FOOTMAN.

FOOTMAN.

Pray does not Sir John Reſtleſs live ſomewhere hereabout?

Sir JOHN.

He does, friend; what is your buſineſs with him?

FOOTMAN.

My buſineſs is with his lady.

Sir JOHN.

I gueſſed as much. (*aſide*)

FOOTMAN.

I have a letter here for my Lady Reſtleſs, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

A letter for my Lady!—from whom, pray?

FOOTMAN.

From my Lord Conqueſt.

Sir JOHN.

My Lord Conqueſt! very well, friend: you may give the letter to me. I am Sir John Reſtleſs: that there is my houſe. Let me have the letter: I will take care of it.

FOOTMAN.

I was ordered to deliver it into my Lady's own hand.

Sir JOHN.

The devil you was! I muſt have the letter. I'll buy it of the raſcal. (*aſide*) Here take this for your trouble, friend, (*gives him money*) And I'll take care of the letter.

FOOTMAN.

I humbly thank your Honour. [*Exit.*

Sir JOHN.

Now, now, now; let me ſee what this is. Now my Lady Reſtleſs; now falſe one, now. (*reads*)

" Madam,

" My Lady Conqueſt being gone into the country " for a few days, I have judged it proper to ſend a " ſpeedy anſwer to yours, and to aſſure you, for your " peace of mind, that you need not entertain the

" leaſt

" leaſt ſuſpicion of Marmalet, my Lady's woman.
" She has lived ſome years in my family, and I
" know her by experience to be an honeſt, truſty girl,
" incapable of making miſchief between your Lady-
" ſhip and Sir John.

" I have the honour to be,

" Madam, your very humble ſervant,

CONQUEST."

So! ſo! ſo!—Marmalet is a truſty girl! one that will not make miſchief between man and wife! that is to ſay, ſhe will diſcover nothing againſt my Lady Reſtleſs! for her peace of mind he lets Madam know all this too! ſhe may go on boldly now; my Lady Conqueſt is gone into the country, Marmalet is truſty, and my Lord has given her the moſt ſpeedy notice. Very well! very well! proofs thicken upon proofs. Shall I go directly and challenge his Lordſhip?—No—no—that won't do. Watch him cloſely, that will do better. If I could have a word in private with the maid—Robert, Robert, come hither. Step to my Lord Conqueſt's—but with caution proceed—enquire there for Marmalet, the maid.

ROBERT.

I know her, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

He knows her! (*aſide*)

ROBERT.

She viſits our Tattle, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

Viſits our Tattle!—it is a plain caſe. (*aſide*) Enquire for that girl: but with caution: tell her to meet

meet me privately; unknown to any body; in the duſk of the evening; in the Bird-Cage walk, yonder.

ROBERT.

I will, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

And don't let Tattle ſee her. Tattle has engaged her in her miſtreſs's intereſt. I ſee how it is. Don't let any of my ſervants ſee her: go directly, Robert. Now ſhall I judge what regard you have for me. But, hark ye: Come hither! a word with you. Should it be known that this girl converſes with me; ſhould my Lady have the leaſt item of it, they will be upon their guard. Let her come wrapped up in darkneſs: concealed from every obſerver, with a maſk on. Ay, let it be with a maſk.

ROBERT.

A maſk, Sir John? Won't that make her be remarked the more?

Sir JOHN.

No, no, let her come maſked; I will make every thing ſure. Robert, bring this about for me, and I am your friend for ever.

ROBERT.

I will do my endeavour, Sir. [*Exit.*

Sir JOHN.

I'll now take a turn round the Park, and try if I can find the minion this picture belongs to. [*Exit.*

Enter

Enter BEVERLEY *and* BELLMONT.

BEVERLEY.

Yes, they had almoſt ſurprized us: but at ſight of her father, Belinda gave the word, and away I darted down towards the canal.

BELLMONT.

Was Sir William with him?

BEVERLEY.

Yes; they had been plotting our ruin. But we ſhall out-officer them, it is to be hoped.

BELLMONT.

Yes, and it is alſo to be feared that we ſhall not.

BEVERLEY.

Hey! you alarm me: no new mine ſprung!

BELLMONT.

Nothing but the old ſtory. Our wife fathers are determined. At the turning of yonder corner they came both full tilt upon Clariſſa and me.

BEVERLEY.

Well, and how! what paſſed?

BELLMONT.

Why they were ſcarcely civil to your ſiſter. Sir William fixed his ſurly eye upon me for ſome time: at laſt he began: you will run counter to my will, I ſee: you will be ever dangling after that girl: but Mr. Blandford and I have agreed upon the match: and then he peremptorily commanded

manded me to take my leave of Clariſſa, and fix my heart upon your Belinda.

BEVERLEY.

And did you ſo?

BELLMONT.

And did you ſo? How can you aſk ſuch a queſtion? Sir, ſays I, I muſt ſee the lady home, and off I marched, arm in arm, with her, my father bawling after me, and I bowing to him, "Sir, your humble "ſervant, I wiſh you a good morning, Sir." He continued calling out: I kiſſed my hand to him; and ſo we made our eſcape.

BEVERLEY.

And where have you left Clariſſa?

BELLMONT.

At home; at your houſe.

BEVERLEY.

Well! and do you both continue in the ſame mind; is to-morrow to be your wedding-day?

BELLMONT.

Now are you conjuring up a thouſand horrid fancies to torment yourſelf. But don't be alarmed, my dear Beverley. I ſhall leave you your Belinda, and content myſelf with the honour of being your brother-in-law.

BEVERLEY.

Sir, the honour will be to me—But uneaſy!—ha ha!

ha!——no——no——I am not uneaſy, nor ſhall I ever be ſo again.

BELLMONT.

Keep that reſolution, if you can. Do you dine with us at the club?

BEVERLEY.

With all my heart: I'll attend you.

BELLMONT.

That's right; let us turn towards the Mall, and ſaunter there till dinner.

BEVERLEY.

No, I can't go that way yet. I muſt enquire how Belinda does, and what her father ſaid to her. I have not ſeen her ſince we parted in the morning.

BELLMONT.

And now, according to cuſtom, you will make her an apology for leaving her, when there was an abſolute neceſſity for it, and you'll fall to an explanation of circumſtances that require no explanation at all, and refine upon things, and torment yourſelf and her into the bargain.

BEVERLEY.

Nay, if you begin with your raillery, I am off: your ſervant; *a l'honneur*. *Exit.*

BELLMONT. (*alone*)

Poor Beverley!—Tho' a handſome fellow, and of agreeable talents, he has ſuch a ſtrange diffidence in him-

himſelf, and ſuch a ſolicitude to pleaſe, that he is every moment of his life moſt ingeniouſly elaborating his own uneaſineſs.

Enter Sir JOHN.

Sir JOHN.

Not yet, not yet; nobody like it as yet. Ha! who is that hovering about my houſe?——If that ſhould be he now!——I'll examine him nearer—— Pray, Sir——what the devil ſhall I ſay?——Pray, Sir——

BELLMONT.

Sir!

Sir JOHN.

I beg pardon for troubling you, Sir; but pray what o'clock is it by your watch?

BELLMONT.

By my watch, Sir!—I'll let you know in a moment.

Sir JOHN.

Let me examine him now——(*looks at him, and then at the picture*)

BELLMONT.

Egad, I am afraid my watch is not right: it muſt be later. (*looking at his watch*)

Sir JOHN.

It is not like him——(*comparing the picture*)

BELL-

BELLMONT.

It does not go, I am afraid. *(puts it to his ear)*

Sir JOHN.

The eye——no!

BELLMONT.

Why, Sir, by my watch it wants a quarter of three.

Sir JOHN.

It is not he: and yet---no---no---no---I am ſtill to ſeek.

Enter BEVERLEY.

BEVERLEY.

Bellmont! Another word with you.

Sir JOHN.

Here comes another; they are all ſwarming about my houſe.

BEVERLEY.

I have ſeen her; I have ſeen Belinda, my boy: ſhe will be with Clariſſa in the Park immediately after dinner, you rogue.

Sir JOHN.

I want to ſee his face; this may be the original.

BEVERLEY.

Her father has been rating her in his uſual manner;

ner; but your marriage with my ſiſter will ſettle every thing.

Sir JOHN.

I'll walk round him. (*ſings*) Loll toll loll---(*looks at him*)---ha! it has his air. (*ſings*) Loll toll loll,---and it has his eye! Loll toll loll——

(*walks to and fro*)

BEVERLEY.

Prithee, Bellmont, don't be ſuch a dangling lover, but conſummate at once, for the ſake of your friend.

Sir JOHN.

It has his noſe for all the world.

BELLMONT.

Do you ſpirit your ſiſter up to keep her reſolution, and to-morrow puts you out of all pain.

Sir JOHN.

Loll toll loll---it has his complexion; the ſame glowing, hot, amorous complexion.

(*ſings and looks uneaſy*)

BEVERLEY.

Who is this gentleman?

BELLMONT.

An odd fellow he ſeems to be.

Sir JOHN.

Loll toll toll---it has his ſhoulders. Loll toll loll —Ay, and I fancy the mole upon the cheek too. I wiſh I could view him nearer: loll toll loll!

BE-

BEVERLEY.

He ſeems mad, I think. Where are his keepers?

Sir JOHN.

Begging your pardon, Sir---Pray (*looking at him and the picture*)---Pray, Sir, can you tell whether we ſhall have a Spaniſh war?

BEVERLEY.

Not I truly, Sir. (*to Bellmont*) Here is a politician out of his ſenſes.

BELLMONT.

He has been talking to me too: he is too well dreſſed for a poet.

BEVERLEY.

Not, if he has had a good ſubſcription.

Sir JOHN.

He has the mole ſure enough. (*aſide*)

BEVERLEY.

Let us ſtep this way, to avoid this impertinent blockhead.

Sir JOHN.

Ay! he wants to ſneak off. Guilt! guilt! conſcious guilt! I'll make ſure of him. Pray, Sir,—— I beg your pardon---Is not your name Wildair?

BEVERLEY.

No, Sir, Beverley at your ſervice.

Sir JOHN.

Have you no relation of that name?

BEVERLEY.

None.

Sir JOHN.

You are very like a gentleman of that name---a friend of mine, whose picture I have here---Will you give me leave just to---

(*compares him with the picture*)

BEVERLEY.

An odd adventure this, Bellmont.

BELLMONT.

Very odd, indeed.

BEVERLEY.

Do you find any likeness, Sir?

Sir JOHN.

Your head a little more that way, if you please. Ay! ay! it is he. 'Yes, a plain case; this is my man, or rather,---this is my wife's man.

BEVERLEY.

Did you ever know any thing so whimsical?

BELLMONT.

Never——ha! ha! ha!

Sir JOHN.

They are both laughing at me. Ay! and I shall be laughed at by the whole town, pointed at, hooted at, and gazed at!

BE-

BEVERLEY.

What do I ſee? 'Sdeath, the ſetting of that picture is like what I gave to Belinda. Diſtraction! if it is the ſame —— (*drawing near him*)

Sir JOHN.

He makes his approach, and means, I ſuppoſe, to ſnatch it out of my hand. But I'll prevent him, and ſo into my pocket it goes. There, lie ſafe there.

BEVERLEY.

Confuſion! he puts it up in a hurry. Will you be ſo good, Sir, as to favour me with a---

Sir JOHN.

Sir, I wiſh you a good day.

BEVERLEY.

With a ſight of that picture for a moment?

Sir JOHN.

The picture, Sir——Po!---a mere daub.

BEVERLEY.

A motive of curioſity, Sir---

Sir JOHN.

It is not worth your ſeeing. I wiſh you a good day.

BEVERLEY.

I ſhall take it as a favour.

Sir JOHN.

A paltry thing. I have not a moment to ſpare; my family is waiting dinner. Sir, I wiſh you a good morning. (*runs into his houſe*)

BEVERLEY.

Death and fire! Bellmont, my picture!

BELLMONT.

Oh! no---no ſuch thing.

BEVERLEY.

But I am ſure of it. If Belinda---

BELLMONT.

What relapſing into ſuſpicion again!

BEVERLEY.

Sir, I have reaſon to ſuſpect. She ſlights me, diſdains me, treats me with contempt.

BELLMONT.

But I tell you, that unhappy temper of yours—Prithee, man, leave teazing yourſelf, and let us adjourn to dinner.

BEVERLEY.

No, Sir; I ſhan't dine at all. I am not well.

BELLMONT.

Ridiculous! how can you be ſo abſurd? I'll bett you twenty pounds that is not your picture.

BE-

BEVERLEY.

Done; I take it.

BELLMONT.

With all my heart; and I'll tell you more; if it be your's, I will give you leave to be as jealous of her as you pleaſe. Come, now let us adjourn.

BEVERLEY.

I attend you. In the evening we ſhall know the truth. If it be that I gave Belinda, ſhe is falſe, and I am miſerable. [*Exeunt.*

Sir JOHN. (*peeping after them*)

There he goes; there he goes! the deſtroyer of my peace and happineſs!—I'll follow him, and make ſure that he has given me the right name; and then, my Lady Reſtleſs, the mine is ſprung, and I have done with your for ever.

End of the SECOND ACT.

ACT the THIRD.

The former Scene continues.

Enter BELINDA *and* CLARISSA.

BELINDA.

BUT have you really fixed every thing, Clariſſa?

CLARISSA.

Poſitively, and to-morrow morning makes me his.

BELINDA.

To-morrow morning!

CLARISSA.

Yes, to-morrow morning I releaſe Mr. Bellmont from his fetters, and reſign my perſon to him.

BELINDA.

Why, that is what we poor women, after all the victories of our charms, all the triumphs of our beauty, and all the murders of our eyes, muſt come to at laſt.

CLARISSA.

Well, and in that we but imitate the men. Don't we read of them conquering whole kingdoms, and then ſubmitting at laſt to be governed by the vanquiſhed.

Be-

BELINDA.

Very true, Clariſſa; and I don't know but you are a heroine equal in fame to any of them; nay ſuperior: for your ſcheme, I take it, is not to unpeople the world.

CLARISSA.

Prithee, don't talk ſo wildly. To tell you the truth, now that I have ſettled the affair, I begin to be alarmed at what I have done.

BELINDA.

Oh! dear, dear affectation!

CLARISSA.

Actually now, poſitively, I am terrified to death.

BELINDA.

To be ſure:—our ſex muſt play its tricks, and ſummon up all its fantaſtic train of doubts and fears. But courage, my dear, don't be frightened, for the ſame ſex within that heart of yours will urge you on, and never let you be at reſt, till you have procured yourſelf a tyrant for life.

CLARISSA.

A tyrant, Belinda! I think more generouſly of Mr. Bellmont, than to imagine he will uſurp to himſelf an ill uſe of his power.

BELINDA.

To deal candidly I am of your opinion. But tell me now, am not I a very good girl, to reſign ſuch a man to you?

CLARISSA.

Why, indeed, I muſt confeſs the obligation.

BELINDA.

Ay! but to reſign him for one whoſe temper does not promiſe that I ſhall live under ſo mild a government.

CLARISSA.

How do you mean?

BELINDA.

Why, Mr. Beverley's ſtrange caprices, ſuſpicions, and unaccountable whimſies, are enough to alarm one upon the brink of matrimony.

CLARISSA.

Well, I vow I can't help thinking, Belinda, that you are a little ſubject to vain ſurmiſes and ſuſpicions yourſelf.

BELINDA.

Now, your are an inſincere girl. You know I am of a temper too generous, too open——

CLARISSA.

I grant all that, but by this conſtant repetition of the ſame doubts, I ſhould not wonder to ſee you moſt heartily jealous of him in the end.

BELINDA.

Jealous!— Oh heavens!—jealous indeed!

CLA-

CLARISSA.

Well, I ſay no more. As to my brother, here he comes, and let him ſpeak for himſelf.

Enter BEVERLEY *and* BELLMONT.

BELLMONT.

Well argued, Sir: you will have it your own way, and I give up the point. Ladies your moſt obedient. I hope we have not tranſgreſſed our time.

BELINDA.

Not in the leaſt; you are both very exact. True as the dial to the ſun.

BEVERLEY. (*in a peeviſh manner.*)

Although it be not ſhone upon.

BELINDA.

Although it be not ſhone upon, Mr. Beverley! why with that dejected air, pray Sir?

BELLMONT.

There again now! you two are going to commence wrangling lovers once more. A-propos, Belinda—now Beverley, you ſhall ſee—be ſo good, Ma'am as to let me ſee this gentleman's picture.

BELINDA.

His picture! what can you want it for? You ſhall have it. (*ſearching her pocket.*)

BELL-

BELLMONT.

Now, Beverley, do you confeſs how wrong you have been?

BEVERLEY.

Why, I begin to ſee my miſtake. Say not a word to her; ſhe'll never forgive me, if you diſcover my infirmity. *(apart)*

BELINDA.

It is not in that pocket: it muſt be here. *(ſearches)*

BELLMONT.

You have been ſad company on account of this ſtrange ſuſpicion.

BEVERLEY.

I own it; let it drop; ſay no more. *(aſide)*

BELINDA.

Well! I proteſt and vow—where can it be? Come, gentlemen, this is ſome trick of yours: you have it among ye. Mr. Bellmont, Mr. Beverley, pray return it to me.

BEVERLEY.

No, Ma'am, it is no trick of ours. *(angrily)*

BELINDA.

As I live and breathe I have not got it.

BEVER-

BEVERLEY.

What think you now, Bellmont?

BELLMONT.

She'll find it preſently, man; don't ſhew your humours: be upon your guard; you'll undo yourſelf elſe. Clariſſa, ſhall you and I ſaunter down this walk?

CLARISSA.

My brother ſeems out of humour: what is the matter now?

BELLMONT.

I'll tell you preſently: let us ſtep this way.

[*Exit with Clariſſa.*

BELINDA.

Well, I declare, I don't know what is come of this odious picture.

BEVERLEY.

This odious picture! how ſhe expreſſes it!

BELINDA.

You may look grave, Sir, but I have it not.

BEVERLEY.

I know you have not, Ma'am; and though you may imagine——

BELINDA.

Imagine! what do you mean?—Imagine what?

BEVER-

BEVERLEY.

Don't imagine that I am to be led blindfold as you pleaſe.

BELINDA.

Heavens! with what gravity that was ſaid!

BEVERLEY.

I am not to be deceived; I can ſee all round me.

BELINDA.

You can?

BEVERLEY.

I can, Madam.

BELINDA.

Well, and how do you like your proſpect?

BEVERLEY.

Oh! you may think to paſs it off in raillery: but that picture I have this day ſeen in the hands of another; in the hands of the very gentleman to whom you gave it.

BELINDA.

To whom I gave it?—have a care, Sir; this is another ſymptom of your jealous temper.

BEVERLEY.

But I tell you, Madam, I ſaw it in his hand.

BELINDA.

Who is the gentleman?—What's his name?

BEVERLEY.

His name, Madam!—'ſdeath! I forgot that circumſtance. Though I don't know his name, Madam, I know his perſon, and that is ſufficient.

BELINDA.

Go on, Sir: you are making yourſelf very ridiculous in this matter.— Ha! ha!——

BEVERLEY.

You may laugh, Madam, but it is no laughing matter, that let me aſſure you.

BELINDA.

Oh! brave—follow your own notions. I gave it away: I have ſcorned your preſent. Ha! ha!—Poor Mr. Beverley!

BEVERLEY.

I don't doubt you, Ma'am: I believe you did give it away.

BELINDA.

Mighty well, Sir, think ſo if you pleaſe. I ſhall leave you to your own imagination: it will find wherewithal to entertain you. Ha! ha! the ſelf-tormenting Beverley! yonder I ſee Clariſſa and Mr. Bellmont. I will join them this inſtant. Your ſervant, Sir. Amuſe yourſelf with your own fancies—ha! ha! [*Exit.*

BERVER-

(BEVERLEY. (*alone*)

Plague and diſtraction !—I can't tell what to make of this. She carries it off with an air of confidence. And yet if that be my picture, which I ſaw this morning, then it is plain I am only laught at by her. The dupe of her caprice !—I cannot bear it.

Enter BELINDA, CLARISSA, *and* BELLMOUR.

BELINDA.

Obſerve him now. Let us walk by him without taking any notice. Let us talk of any thing rather than be ſilent. What a charming evening !

CLARISSA.

And how gay the Park looks !—mind the gentleman !

BELINDA.

Take no notice ; I beg you wont. Suppoſe we were to ſhew ourſelves in the Mall, Clariſſa, and walk our charms there, as the French expreſs it ?

BELLMOUR.

Ha ! ha !—Beverley !—what fixed in contemplation !

BEVERLEY.

Sir, I beg—I chuſe to be alone, Sir.

BELLMOUR, BELINDA, *and* CLARISSA.

Ha ! ha ! ha !

BE-

BEVERLEY.

Pſhaw! impertinent. (*aſide*)

BELINDA.

Oh! for heaven's ſake, let us indulge the gentleman. Let us leave him him to himſelf, and his ill-humours. This way, this way. You ſhall go home and have your tea with me. Mr. Beverley, (*ſhe kiſſes her hand to him at ſome diſtance, and laughs at him*) your ſervant, Sir: I wiſh you a good evening. A l'honneur. [*Exeunt.*

BEVERLEY. (*alone*)

Diſtraction! you may retire. Your ſervant, Madam. Racks and torment! this is too much. If ſhe has parted with the picture; if ſhe has given it away—but ſhe may only have lent it, or ſhe may have loſt it. But even that, even that is an injury to me. Why ſhould ſhe not be more careful of it? I will know the bottom of it. That's the houſe the gentleman went into. I'll wait on him directly: but they are watching me. I'll walk another way, to elude their obſervation. Ay! ay! you may laugh Ma'am, but I ſhall find out all your artifices.

[*Exit.*

Scene an Apartment at Sir JOHN'S.

Enter Lady RESTLESS, *meeting* ROBERT.

Lady RESTLESS.

Where are you going, Sir?

Ro-

ROBERT.

To my maſter's room, Madam, to leave theſe cloaths there.

Lady RESTLESS.

Stay, Sir; ſtay a moment. *(ſearches the pockets)* Where are his letters?

ROBERT.

Letters, my Lady! I know of no letters: I never touch his pockets.

Lady RESTLESS.

I gueſſed you would ſay ſo. You are Sir John's agent; the conductor of his ſchemes.

ROBERT.

I, Madam!

Lady RESTLESS.

You, Sir, you are his ſecretary for love-affairs.

ROBERT.

I collect his rents, my Lady, and——

Lady RESTLESS.

Oh! Sir, I am not to be deceived. I know you are my enemy.

ROBERT.

Enemy, my Lady! I am ſure, as far as a poor ſervant dare, I am a friend to both.

Lady

Lady RESTLESS.

Then tell me honeſtly, have not you conveyed his letters out of my way?

ROBERT.

Indeed, Madam, not I.

Lady RESTLESS.

Then he has done it himſelf. Artful man! I never can find a line after him. Where did you go for him this morning?

ROBERT.

This morning!

Lady RESTLESS.

Ay! this morning. I know he ſent you ſomewhere? Where was it?

ROBERT.

Upon my word, my Lady——

Lady RESTLESS.

Very well, Sir: I ſee how it is. You are all bent againſt me. I ſhall never be at reſt till every ſervant in this houſe is of my own chuſing. Is Tattle come home yet?

ROBERT.

No, Madam.

Lady RESTLESS.

Where can ſhe be gadding? Hark!—I hear a

rap at the door. This is Sir John, I ſuppoſe. Stay, let me liſten. I don't know that voice. Who can it be? Some of his libertine company, I ſuppoſe.

ROBERT.

My Lady, if you will believe me——

Lady RESTLESS.

Hold your tongue, man: let me hear. You want to hinder me, do you?

ROBERT.

Indeed, Madam——

Lady RESTLESS.

Hold your tongue, I ſay! won't you hold your tongue? Go about your buſineſs, Sir, go about your buſineſs. What does he ſay? (*liſtening*) I can't hear a word. Who is below there?

Enter TATTLE, *with a Capuchin on.*

Lady RESTLESS.

So, Mrs. Tattle, who is that at the door?

TATTLE.

A gentleman, Madam, ſpeaking to William.

Lady RESTLESS.

And where have you been, miſtreſs? How dare you go out without my leave?

TATTLE.

Dear my Lady, don't be angry with me. I was ſo terri-

terrified about what happened in the morning; and your Ladyſhip was in ſuch a perilous taking about it, that I went to deſire Mrs. Marmalet would juſtify herſelf and me.

Lady Restless.

Oh! very well, Mrs. Buſy-Body. You have been there, have you? You have been to frame a ſtory among yourſelves, have you, and to hinder me from diſcovering? But I'll go to my Lady Conqueſt myſelf. I have had no anſwer to my letter, and 'tis you have occaſioned it. Thanks to your meddling!

Tattle.

Dear my Lady, if you will but give me leave: I have been doing you the greateſt piece of ſervice. I believe, in my conſcience, there is ſomething in what you ſuſpect about Sir John.

Lady Restless.

Do you? why? how?

Tattle.

I have ſeen Mrs. Marmalet, and I have made ſuch a diſcovery!

Lady Restless.

Have you, Tattle? Well! What? ſpeak, tell me; what is it?

Tattle.

Robert has been there, Madam, with a meſſage from Sir John, who wants to ſee her in the evening; and he has deſired——

Lady Restless.

Bleſſings on you, Tattle: well; go on; tell me all.

Enter a Servant.

Lady Restless.

What do you want, Sir? Who called you? Go about your buſineſs.

Servant.

Madam, there is a gentleman wants to ſpeak with Sir John about a picture.

Lady Restless.

I had forgot me. It was he rapped at the door, I ſuppoſe.

Servant.

Yes, Madam!

Lady Restless.

About a picture!---This may lead to ſome further diſcovery. Deſire the gentleman to ſtep up ſtairs. *(Exit Servant)*---and ſo, Tattle, Robert has been there?

Tattle.

Yes, Ma'am.

Lady Restless.

And Sir John wants to ſpeak with Marmalet in the evening, and has deſired---Oh! the baſe man!---what

what has he desired? Now he is discovered. What has he desired?

TATTLE.

He has desired, Ma'am,—the poor girl does not know what to make of it—She is very sober and discreet, I assure you, Ma'am—he has desired, Ma'am, in the dusk of the evening, that Mrs. Marmalet will come and——

Lady RESTLESS.

How unlucky this is? The gentleman is coming. I have a mind not to see him: and yet I will too. Tattle, do you step to my room; as soon as he goes, I will come to you, and hear all in private. (*Exit Tattle*) In the dusk of the evening he desires to see her: abandoned wretch!

Enter BEVERLEY.

BEVERLEY.

Madam——*(bows)*

Lady RESTLESS.

Pray walk in, Sir. *(curtsies)*

BEVERLEY.

I wanted a word with Sir John Restless, Madam.

Lady RESTLESS.

About a picture?

BEVERLEY.

Yes, Madam, a picture I had given to a lady; and however insignificant in itself, it is to me of the

higheſt conſequence, as it may conduce to the explanation of an affair, in which the happineſs of my life is concerned.

Lady Restless.

The lady is young?

Beverley.

She is.

Lady Restless.

And handſome?

Beverley.

In the higheſt degree; my heart is devoted to her; and I have reaſon to ſuſpect, that a preſent from me is not of ſo much value as I could wiſh. To be plain, Ma'am, I imagine ſhe has given the picture away.

Lady Restless.

As I gueſſed: my ſuſpicions are juſt.

Beverley.

Your ſuſpicions, Madam! Did you ſuſpect it was given to Sir John Reſtleſs?

Lady Restless.

What I know of the matter ſhall be no ſecret to you. Pray, Sir, have you ſpoke to the lady on this ſubject?

Beverley.

I have, but ſhe knows nothing of the matter; ſhe has

has loſt it, ſhe has miſlaid it, ſhe can give no account of it.

Lady RESTLESS.

She has given it to Sir John, Sir, to ſhew him how little ſhe regards it.

BEVERLEY.

Given it to him?

Lady RESTLESS.

Given it to him, Sir.

BEVERLEY.

Then I have no further doubt.

Lady RESTLESS.

Of what?

BEVERLEY.

Madam, I would not hurt your peace of mind; I would not give you an impreſſion of Sir John, that may affect his character.

Lady RESTLESS.

Oh! Sir, ſtand upon no ceremony with him; an injurious, falſe, licentious man!

BEVERLEY.

Is that his character?

Lady RESTLESS.

Notoriouſly: he has made me miſerable; falſe to his marriage vows, and warm in the purſuit of his

pleasures abroad!—I have not deserved it of him. Oh! Sir John! Sir John! (*cries*)

BEVERLEY.

She weeps; the case is plain, and I am undone.

Lady RESTLESS.

Pray, Sir, what is the lady's name?

BEVERLEY.

Belinda Blandford.

Lady RESTLESS.

Belinda Blandford! So far I have discovered, (*aside*)

BEVERLEY.

Pray, Madam, have you ever seen her?

Lady RESTLESS.

Seen her, Sir! yes, I have seen too much of her.

BEVERLEY.

You alarm me, Madam. You have seen nothing improper, I hope.

Lady RESTLESS.

I don't know what you call improper. But, pray, what ought one to think of a young lady thrown familiarly into a gentleman's arms?

BEVERLEY.

In his arms, Madam! Sir John's arms!

Lady

Lady RESTLESS.

In Sir John's! in open day; in the Park; under my very window; moſt familiarly, wantonly reclining in his very arms.

BEVERLEY.

Oh! Heavens!

Lady RESTLESS.

He claſping her with equal freedom round the waiſt!

BEVERLEY.

Falſe, falſe Belinda!

Lady RESTLESS.

Both interchanging fond, mutual glances.

BEVERLEY.

Oh! Madam, the whole is come to light, and I thank you for the diſcovery, though I am ruined by it. But give me leave: is all this certain?

Lady RESTLESS.

There can be no doubt, Sir; theſe eyes beheld their amorous meeting.

BEVERLEY.

Saw it yourſelf?

Lady RESTLESS.

Yes, all, all, Sir. Sir John I know is capable of any thing, and you know what to think of Belinda, as you call her.

BE-

BEVERLEY.

I now know what to think: I have long had reason to ſuſpect.

Lady RESTLESS.

You have, Sir? Then the whole affair is plain enough.

BEVERLEY.

It is ſo. I meant an honourable connection with her;——but——

Lady RESTLESS.

But you ſee, Sir!

BEVERLEY.

Yes, I ſee, Madam——you are ſure Sir John has the picture?

Lady RESTLESS.

Sure, Sir!—it is your own picture. I had it in my hands but a moment, and he flew with ardor, with impetuoſity, like a fury flew to it, and recovered it from me. What could be the meaning of all that violence?

BEVERLEY.

The meaning is too plain.

Lady RESTLESS.

And then, Sir, when charged and preſſed home with his guilt, moſt hypocritically he pretended to believe it the portrait of ſome favourite of mine. But you know, Sir, how falſe that inſinuation is.

BE-

BEVERLEY.

Oh! Madam, I can juſtify you---Ha! ha! that is but a poor evaſion, and confirms me the more in my opinion. I return you many thanks, Madam, and humbly take my leave.

Lady RESTLESS.

Sir, I am glad you thought it prudent to ſpeak to me about this affair. If any other circumſtances come to your knowledge, I ſhall take it as a favour if you will acquaint me with them; for, indeed, Sir, I am very unhappy.

BEVERLEY.

I am in gratitude bound to you, and my beſt ſervices you ſhall ever command. Madam, your moſt obedient.——Oh! Belinda! Belinda! [*Exit.*

Lady RESTLESS.

Now, Sir John, how will you be able to confront theſe ſtubborn facts? You are now ſeen through all your diſguiſes; detected in your true colours. Tattle within here has freſh proofs againſt you, and your man Robert, and the whole houſe. I muſt hear Tattle's ſtory this very moment. [*Exit.*

SCENE, *the* PARK.

Enter Sir JOHN.

Sir JOHN.

Yes, yes, he told me his name honeſtly enough. Beverley is his name; and my Lady Reſtleſs, now your gallant, your paramour is known. What do I ſee?

ſee? By all my wrongs, the very man again! coming out of my houſe before my face!

BEVERLEY *and* ROBERT *come out of the Houſe.*

BEVERLEY.

There, friend, there is ſomething for your trouble.

ROBERT.

I thank your Honour.

Sir JOHN.

He bribes my ſervant too; and the fellow takes it! Both in their trade; both in their trade!

BEVERLEY.

Could I have ſuſpected her of ſuch treachery? As I could wiſh: I take that to be Sir John Reſtleſs.

Sir JOHN.

This is he to whom I have ſo many obligations. *(aſide)*

BEVERLEY.

Well encountered: your ſervant, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

My ſervant, Sir!——I rather take it you are my lady's ſervant.

BEVERLEY.

You, if I don't miſtake, Sir John, are a pretty general ſervant of the ladies. Pray, Sir, have not you a picture of mine in your pocket?

Sir

Sir JOHN.

That, I ſuppoſe, you have heard from my good lady within there.

BEVERLEY.

Yes, Sir, and I have heard a great deal more from my Lady.

Sir JOHN.

I don't in the leaſt doubt it.

BEVERLEY.

Sir, I do not mean to work myſelf up into any choler about ſuch a trifling bauble. Since the lady has thought proper to give it to you——

Sir JOHN.

Do her juſtice, pray; ſhe did not give it; ſo far ſhe was true to you. I took it from her, Sir.

BEVERLEY.

Took it from her! That ſhews he is upon eaſy terms. (*aſide*) It is of no conſequence to me; I deſpiſe it, and you are welcome to make what uſe you will of it. This I will only ſay, that you have made me miſerable.

Sir JOHN.

What, I have interrupted your happineſs?

BEVERLEY.

You have.

Sir

Sir JOHN.

And no doubt you think it cruel of me ſo to do.

BEVERLEY.

Call it by what name you will: you have ruined me with the woman I doated on to diſtraction.

Sir JOHN.

A candid declaration! And ſo, Sir, you doated on her, and never reflected that you were doing me the leaſt injury?

BEVERLEY.

Injury!——I promiſe you, Sir, I will never injure you again, and ſo you may ſet your mind at peace. I here declare I never will hold farther intercourſe with her.

Sir JOHN.

Oh! that is too late for me. I have now done with her myſelf. You are very welcome to the lady, Sir! you may take her home with you as ſoon as you pleaſe. I forſwear her, and ſo I ſhall tell my lady this moment. *(going)*

BEVERLEY.

That will make her Ladyſhip happy, no doubt.

Sir JOHN.

Yes, I dare ſay you know it will.

BEVERLEY.

She told me as much, Sir.

Sir

Sir JOHN.

She did !---why then you may depend I ſhall keep my word, and my Lady may depend upon it too. And that, I ſuppoſe, will make you both happy, Sir.

BEVERLEY.

My happineſs is paſt recalling : I diſdain all further connection with the lady.

Sir JOHN.

Ay, you are tired of her ?

BEVERLEY.

I loath her, deteſt her, hate her as much as I ever loved her.

Sir JOHN.

And ſo do I too, I aſſure you. And ſo I ſhall tell my Lady this very inſtant. Your ſervant, Sir. If I can find proof ſufficient, you ſhall hear of me, I promiſe you. [*Exit.*

BEVERLEY.

I ſee how it is : ſhe has been connected with him, till ſhe has pall'd his very appetite. 'Sdeath, I'll ſeek her this moment, upbraid her with her falſhood, and then—by heavens ! I ſhall do it with regret. I feel a tug at my heart-ſtring : but were I to be torn piece-meal, this ſhall be our laſt interview.

Enter BELINDA, CLARISSA, *and* BELLMONT.

BELINDA.

Alas a-day ! poor ſoul ! ſee where he takes his melancholy

lancholy walk. Did not I tell you, Clariſſa, that the ſtricken deer could not quit this place?

CLARISSA.

And did not I tell you, Belinda, that you could not keep away from the purſuit?

BELLMONT.

Pray, Ma'am, do you want to be in at the death, or do you mean to bring the poor thing to life again?

BELINDA.

I!—what do you mean?—You bring me this way.

CLARISSA.

Well! if that is the caſe, we had as good go home, for I want my tea.

BELINDA.

Po! not yet: it is not ſix o'clock.

BELLMONT *and* CLARISSA.

Ha! ha!

BELINDA.

What do ye laugh at?

CLARISSA.

At you, my dear: why, 'tis paſt ſeven. Oh! Belinda, you are the ſtricken deer, I find.

BELINDA.

Who I? Not I truly; I——

CLA-

CLARISSA.

My dear Belinda, I know you. Come, we will do the good natured thing by you, and leave you to yourſelves. Succeſs attend you. Come, Mr. Bellmont. [*Exeunt*

BELINDA.

Thyrſis, a youth of the inſpired train,
Fair Sachariſſa lov'd, but lov'd in vain.

BEVERLEY.

Po! po! (*looking peeviſhly at her.*)

BELINDA.

Won't you know me, Sir?

BEVERLEY.

Yes, Madam, I know you: it is but too true, that I know you.

BELINDA.

Still gloomy and diſcontented! Come, come, under pain of my diſpleaſure, brighten up this moment.

BEVERLEY.

Silly, idle, ridiculous!

BELINDA.

Take care of what you are about. When I proclaim a pardon, you had better embrace it, than reduce yourſelf to the neceſſity of ſighing, vowing, proteſting, writing to me, following me up and down, kneeling at my feet, imploring forgiveneſs—

BEVERLEY.

Madam, you will never again ſee me humbled to that low degree.

BELINDA.

Upon my word! ha! ha! ha!

BEVERLEY.

Oh! you may laugh, Ma'am: you have too long impoſed upon my fond, eaſy credulity. But the witchery of your charms is over.

BELINDA.

Very well, Sir! and you are your own man again.

BEVERLEY.

I am, Madam, and you may be your own woman again, or any body's woman, or every body's.

BELINDA.

You grow rude, Sir!

BEVERLEY.

It is time to wave all ceremony, and to tell you plainly, that your falſhood——

BELINDA.

My falſhood, Sir!

BEVERLEY.

Your falſhood!—I know the whole ſtory. I loved you once, Belinda, tenderly loved you, and by Heaven I ſwear, it is with ſorrow that I can no longer adore

adore you. It is with anguiſh that I now bid you an everlaſting farewel. (*going*)

BELINDA.

Explain, Sir: what action of my life?

BEVERLEY.

Your prudence forſook you at laſt. It was too glaring; too manifeſt in open day!

BELINDA.

Too manifeſt in open day!—Mr. Beverley I ſhall hate you.

BEVERLEY.

All circumſtances inform againſt you: my picture given away!

BELINDA.

Inſolent! provoking! wrong-headed man! I'll confirm him in his error, to torment him as he deſerves. (*aſide*) Well, Sir, what if I choſe to give it away! I am miſtreſs of my own actions, am I not?

BEVERLEY.

I know that, Ma'am: I know that; and I am not uneaſy, Ma'am.

BELINDA.

So it ſeems—ha! ha!—why do you ſigh, poor man?

BEVERLEY.

Sigh, Madam! I diſdain it.

BELINDA.

I am glad of it; now that is ſo manly! but pray watch yourſelf well, hold a guard upon all your paſſions, otherwiſe they will make a fool of you again.

BEVERLEY.

And do you take care you don't expoſe yourſelf again. Lolling familiarly in a gentleman's arms;

BELINDA.

How!

BEVERLEY.

Here, in the Park! in open day!

BELINDA.

What can this mean?

BEVERLEY.

He inviting you to his houſe!

BELINDA.

Oh! I underſtand him now; when I fainted, all this was. I'll encourage his notion, to be revenged of his waſpiſh temper. (*aſide*) Well, Sir, and what then?

BEVERLEY.

What then?

BELINDA.

Ha! ha! poor Mr. Beverley!—why ſhould you be in a piteous taking, becauſe I, in the gaiety of my heart,

heart, give away a picture I set no value on, or walk with a gentleman I do set a value on, or lean on his arm, or make the man happy by letting him draw on my glove.

BEVERLEY.

Or draw off your glove, Madam.

BELINDA.

Ay! or draw it off!

BEVERLEY.

Yes, or—or—or take any other liberties.

BELINDA.

Very true.

BEVERLEY.

You may make light of it, Madam, but——

BELINDA.

Why yes, a generous temper always makes light of the favours it confers.

BEVERLEY.

And some generous tempers will make light of any thing to gratify their inclinations. Madam, I have done: I abjure you; eternally abjure you. (*going*)

BELINDA.

Bon voyage!

BEVERLEY.

Don't imagine that you will ſee me again.

BELINDA.

Adieu!——Well, what, coming again? Why do you linger ſo? (*repeats affectedly*)

Thus o'er the dying lamp, the unſteady flame
Hangs quivering to a point!

BEVERLEY.

With what an air ſhe carries it? I have but this one thing more to tell you: by Heaven I loved you, to exceſs I loved you: ſuch is my weakneſs, I ſhall never quite forget you. I ſhall be glad, if hereafter I hear of your happineſs, and if I can, no diſhonour ſhall befall you.

BELINDA.

Ho! ho!—well! my obliging, generous Don Quixote, go and fight windmills, and caſtles in the air, and a thouſand phantoms of your own creation, for your Dulcinea's ſake! ho! ho! ho!

BEVERLEY.

Confuſion! Take notice, Madam, that this is the laſt time of my troubling you.

BELINDA.

I ſhall expect you to-morrow morning.

BEVERLEY.

No, never; by Heaven, never!

BE-

BELINDA.

Exactly at ten; your uſual hour.

BEVERLEY.

May I periſh at your feet, if ever again——

BELINDA.

Oh! brave! but remember ten; kneeling, beſeeching, imploring, your hand upon your heart, "Belinda, won't you forgive me?"

BEVERLEY.

Damnation!——I have done: I here bid you an eternal adieu!---farewel for ever! [*Exit.*

BELINDA.

I ſhall wait breakfaſt for you. Ha! ha! poor Beverley! he cannot command his temper. But, in ſpite of all his faults, I love him ſtill. What the poet ſays of great wits, may be applied to all jealous lovers;

——To madneſs ſure they're near allied;
And thin partitions do their bounds divide.

End of the THIRD ACT.

ACT the FOURTH.

Scene an Apartment in BEVERLEY'S *Houſe.*

Enter BEVERLEY.

SO! Belinda, I have eſcaped your ſnares: I have recovered my freedom. And yet, if ſhe had not proved falſe, what a treaſure of love and happineſs had I in ſtore! her beauty—po! no more of her beauty: it is external, ſuperficial, the mere reſult of features and complexion. A deceitful Syren, to draw the unwary into a dream of happineſs, and then wake him into wonder at the ſtorms and tempeſts that gather round him. I have done with her; I'll think no more of her. Oh! Belinda! Belinda!

Enter BRUSH.

BRUSH.

Pleaſe your Honour——

BEVERLEY.

She that in every part of life ſeemed ſo amiable!

BRUSH.

Sir!

BEVERLEY.

Under ſo fair a maſk to wear ſuch looſe deſigns!

BRUSH.

What is he muſing upon?—Sir——

BE-

BEVERLEY.

I have done with her for ever; ay, for ever. (*hums a tune*) I ſwear for ever (*ſings*)—are you there, Bruſh?

BRUSH.

Yes, your Honour: here is a letter.

BEVERLEY.

So unforeſeen, ſo unexpected a diſcovery! Well! well! well! what did you ſay, Bruſh?

BRUSH.

A letter for your Honour, Sir.

BEVERLEY.

Give it to me another time. (*walks about*) I'll not make myſelf uneaſy about her.

BRUSH.

I fancy your Honour will be glad to have it now.

BEVERLEY.

What did you ſay?

BRUSH.

It is a letter from Madam Belinda, Sir.

BEVERLEY.

Belinda! I won't read it: take it away.

BRUSH.

Hey! which way is the wind now? Some quarrel I ſup-

I ſuppoſe: but the falling out of lovers—muſt I take it away, Sir?

BEVERLEY.

I have done with her for ever.

BRUSH.

Have done with Madam Belinda, Sir!

BEVERLEY.

Oh! Bruſh ſhe is—but I will not proclaim her ſhame. No, let me ſtill be tender of her. I will ſee her no more, Bruſh, that is all; hear from her no more: ſhe ſhall not wind herſelf about my heart again. I'll go out of town directly: order my chaiſe to the door.

BRUSH.

Had not you better defer it till morrow morning, Sir? perhaps then——

BEVERLEY.

No, no; directly; do as I bid you.

BRUSH.

Conſider, Sir, if your mind ſhould change, the trouble of coming back poſt-haſte——

BEVERLEY.

No, never; I ſay, never: what to her, who could ſmile on me, on him, on a thouſand? No; ſhe ſhall know that I am a man, and no longer the dupe of her artifice.

BRUSH.

BRUSH.

But, Sir, you know that one ſolitary tear, which, after miſerably chafing for it half an hour together, ſhe will painfully diſtil from the corner of her eye, will extinguiſh all this rage, and then——

BEVERLEY.

Po! po! you know nothing of the matter. Go, and order the chaiſe directly.

BRUSH.

Yes, Sir. I ſuppoſe a couple of ſhirts will be ſufficient, Sir?—you will hardly ſtay them out.

BEVERLEY.

Pack up all, Sir. I ſhall ſtay in the country a whole month, if it be neceſſary.

BRUSH.

An entire mouth, Sir!

BEVERLEY.

I am reſolved, fixed, determined; and ſo, do as I have ordered you. (*Exit Bruſh*)——So ſhall I diſentangle myſelf from her entirely, ſo ſhall I forget the fondneſs my fooliſh heart had conceived for her. I hate her, loath her, pity her, am ſorry for her, and love her ſtill. I muſt expel this weakneſs: I will think no more of her: and yet---Bruſh! Bruſh!---I may as well ſee her letter too: only to try what her cunning can ſuggeſt.

Enter

Enter BRUSH.

BEVERLEY.

You may as well leave the letter, Brush.

BRUSH.

Yes, Sir; I thought as much. [*Exit.*

BEVERLEY. (*alone*)

Now what varnish will she put upon the matter! —(*reads*) "The false gaiety of my heart, through "which my dear Beverley might have read my real "anguish at our last meeting, has now subsided. If "you will come to me, I will not laugh at your in- "quietude of temper, but will clear all your "doubts, and shew you how much I am, my dearest "Beverley, unalterably your's,

"BELINDA BLANDFORD."

Pshaw! po! satisfy my doubts! I have no doubts; I am convinced. These arts prevail no more. Ha! ha! (*laughs peevishly*)—"My dear "Beverley" (*reads, and tears the letter by degrees*)— "real anguish"—ha! ha! (*tears another piece*)— "inquietude of temper"—(*another piece*)—"clear "all your doubts"—Po! po! po!—ha! ha!— damnation!—I'll think no more of her—(*tears an- other bit*)—ha! ha!—"dearest Beverley"—ha! ha! —artfull woman!—"unalterably your's"——false! false! false!—(*tears another piece*)—I'll not make myself uneasy about her. Perfidy! treachery! and ingratitude! (*fixes his eye, looks uneasy, and tears the letter in a violent passion*)

Enter CLARISSA *and* BELLMONT.

CLARISSA.

So, brother!

BELL-

BELLMONT.

Beverley!

BEVERLEY.

Sifter, your ſervant: Mr. Bellmont, your's.

CLARISSA.

You ſeem melancholy, brother.

BEVERLEY.

No, not I. I am in very good ſpirits.

CLARISSA.

Ha! ha! my dear brother, that is ſeen through: you are now upon the rack.

BEVERLEY.

What about a woman, a falſe, ungrateful woman!

BELLMONT.

Whom you ſtill admire.

CLARISSA.

To whom you'll be upon your knees in five minutes.

BEVERLEY.

You are miſtaken: I am going out of town.

BELLMONT.

But you will take your leave.

BEVERLEY.

I have done that, once for all.

CLARISSA.

Has not ſhe writ to you?

BEVERLEY.

She has; and there,---there you ſee the effect of her letter. You will ſee that I ſhall maintain a proper firmneſs on the occaſion.

BELLMONT.

My dear Beverley, have done with this mockery: you but deceive yourſelf.

BEVERLEY.

You want to deceive me, Sir: but it is in vain, What, plead for treachery, for falſehood, for deceit?

CLARISSA.

No, Sir, but for my friend, my lovely friend, for Belinda, for truth, for innocence.

BEVERLEY.

You don't know all the circumſtances.

CLARISSA.

But we do know all the circumſtances, and, my dear brother, you have behaved very ill.

BEVERLEY.

Heaven knows, I have not, and yet, Heaven knows, I ſhould be glad to be convinced I have.

CLA-

CLARISSA.

I will be your friend, and give you a hint. We women are ſoft and compaſſionate in our nature; go to her without delay, fall at her feet, beg her pardon, drop a tear or two, and all will be well again.

BEVERLEY.

Do you come to make ſport of me? May contempt and beggary attend me; may all the calamities of life befal me; may ſhame, confuſion, and diſquiet of heart for ever ſting me, if I hold further intercourſe with her; if I do not put her from my thoughts for ever. Did you leave her at home?

CLARISSA.

We did.

BEVERLEY.

Well, let her ſtay there: it is of no conſequence to me. How did ſhe bear what paſſed between us?

CLARISSA.

Like a ſweet girl as ſhe is: ſhe behaved like an angel: I ſhall love her better than ever for her good humour.

BEVERLEY.

Oh! I don't doubt her good humour. She has ſmiles at command. Let her ſmile or not ſmile, 'tis all alike to me: did ſhe ſay any thing?

CLARISSA.

She told us the whole ſtory, and told it in tears too.

BE-

BEVERLEY.

Ay! them ſhe can command too! But I have no curioſity about her: Was ſhe in tears?

CLARISSA.

She was, and wept bitterly. How could you, brother, behave ſo raſhly to ſo amiable a girl? Have you a pleaſure in being the cauſe of her uneaſineſs?

BEVERLEY.

I the cauſe?—you wrong me, by Heaven you wrong me: my Lady Reſtleſs was the cauſe. She told me ſuch things; ſhe planted daggers in my very heart.

CLARISSA.

You planted daggers in Belinda's heart. And it was barbarous. What, becauſe a lady has not ſtrength enough to bear up againſt a father, who is reſolved to give her away to another, and becauſe ſhe faints out of exceſſive tenderneſs for you, and in that diſtreſs meets accidental relief from Sir John Reſtleſs at his own door?

BEVERLEY.

How!

CLARISSA.

And becauſe my Lady Reſtleſs ſees this out of her window, and has a perverſe talent of miſinterpreting appearances into realities, to her own diſadvantage; you muſt therefore fill your head with ungenerous ſuſpicions? Oh! for ſhame, brother, how could you?

BE-

BEVERLEY.

But, is all this true?—is it really the caſe?

BELLMONT.

How can you doubt it? You know Belinda too well: it is the caſe, man.

BEVERLEY.

I ſhould be glad to find it ſo.

CLARISSA.

Well! I tell you it is ſo. How could you think otherwiſe? you know ſhe has the beſt heart in the world, and is ſo nice of honour, that ſhe ſcorns all falſhood and diſſimulation.

BELLMONT.

Ha! ha! my dear Beverley, you have done the abſurdeſt thing.

BEVERLEY.

Why, if what you ſay can be made to appear—— but then ſhe'll never forgive my paſt behaviour.

CLARISSA.

Po! you talk as if you was wholly unletter'd in the tempers of women. My dear brother, you know, you men can do what you pleaſe with us, when you have once gained an intereſt in our hearts. Go to her, I ſay, go to her, and make your peace.

BEVERLEY.

May I depend upon what you ſay?

CLARISSA.

You may.

BEVERLEY.

Then I'll fly to her this inſtant, humble myſelf to her, and promiſe by all my future life to attone for this brutal injury.

Enter BRUSH.

BRUSH.

The chaiſe is at the door, Sir.

BEVERLEY.

You may put up again; I ſhan't go out of town.

BRUSH.

No, Sir!

BEVERLEY.

No—ha! ha!——you may put up, and let me have the chariot directly.

BRUSH.

Yes, Sir; I knew it would come to this. [*Exit.*

BEVERLEY.

But do you think ſhe will forgive me?

CLARISSA.

She will; love will plead your cauſe.

BE-

BEVERLEY.

My dear ſiſter, I am for ever obliged to you; and Bellmont, I thank you too. How could I wrong her ſo? I ſhall behold her once again. I cannot help laughing at my own raſhneſs. Is the chariot ready? —I won't ſtay for it; I am on the wing, my dear Belinda, to implore forgiveneſs. And ſo ſhe fainted away in the Park, and my Lady Reſtleſs ſaw Sir John afford her relief?—Ha! ha! ha!—whimſical enough. Ha! ha! ha! what a ſtrange conſtruction her crazy temper put upon it? Ha! ha! how could the woman be ſo fooliſh? My dear Belinda, I will fly to you this moment—ha! ha! *(going, returns)* Sir John ſhall give me back the picture, and, on my knees, I will once more preſent it to her.

CLARISSA.

So! ſo! you are come to yourſelf, I find.

BELLMONT.

I knew it would be ſo.

BEVERLEY.

She ſhall have the picture. I'll find Sir John directly: and then—ha! ha! how could I be ſuch a madman! ha! ha!—ſiſter, your ſervant. Bellmont, yours. Ha! ha! what a piece of work has that fooliſh Lady Reſtleſs made for us all?

[*Exit, ſinging.*

CLARISSA.

Let us follow him: I muſt be preſent at their reconciliation. [*Exit with Bellmont.*

Scene an Apartment at BELINDA'S.

Enter BELINDA.

BELINDA.

This raſh, unaccountable man! how could he entertain ſuch a ſuſpicion! ungrateful Beverley! he almoſt deſerves I ſhould never ſee him again. Tippet! I ſhan't be eaſy till I hear from him. Tippet!

Enter TIPPET.

BELINDA.

Is the ſervant returned from Mr. Beverley's?

TIPPET.

Not yet, Madam.

BELINDA.

I wonder what keeps him. I am upon thorns till I ſee the dear, ungenerous man, and explain every thing to him. Oh! Mr. Beverley! how could you treat me ſo? But I was partly to blame; my Lady Reſtleſs inflamed his mind, and I ſhould not have trifled with his paſſion. Is the other ſervant returned from Sir John Reſtleſs?

TIPPET.

He is, Madam.

BELINDA.

And what anſwer?

TIPPET.

Sir John will wait upon you himſelf, Madam, directly.

BELINDA.

Very well! I muſt get him to ſet every thing in its true light, and juſtify my conduct to Mr. Beverley. And yet the uncertainty of Beverley's temper alarms me ſtrangely. His eternal ſuſpicions! but there is nothing in that: my future conduct, my regard for him will cure that diſeaſe, and then——

TIPPET.

I dare be ſworn it will, Ma'am.

BELINDA.

Yes, I think it will: when he knows me better, he will learn to think generouſly of me. On my part, I think I can be ſure he will meet with nothing but open, unſuſpecting love.

Enter a SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Sir John Reſtleſs, Madam.

BELINDA.

Shew him in. Tippet, do you leave the room.

Enter Sir JOHN.

Sir JOHN.

In compliance with your commands, Madam——

BELINDA.

I am obliged to you, Sir, for the trouble you have been pleaſed to give yourſelf. A particular circumſtance has happened in your family, to my utter diſquiet.

Sir JOHN.

Madam, there have happened things in my family, to my utter diſquiet too.

BELINDA:

I am ſorry for that, Sir. I have been made quite unhappy, and muſt beg, as it is in your power, that you will be kind enough to remove the cauſe of my uneaſineſs.

Sir JOHN.

Whatever I can do, you may command.

BELINDA.

Sir, I thank you, and muſt tell you, that your Lady has done me the moſt irreparable injury.

Sir JOHN.

She has done the ſame to me. My injuries are irreparable too. But how has ſhe injured you, Madam?

BE-

BELINDA.

She has ruined me, Sir, with the man I love to diſtraction.

Sir JOHN.

Now, here ſomething elſe will come to light (*aſide*)—How, how has ſhe done that, Madam?

BELINDA.

She has entirely drawn off his affections from me.

Sir JOHN.

And fixed them upon herſelf, I ſuppoſe.

BELINDA.

I don't ſay that, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

But I dare ſay it; and I believe it.

BELINDA.

Pardon me, Sir, I don't charge the lady with any thing of that kind. But ſhe has unaccountably taken it into her head to be jealous of me.

Sir JOHN.

Jealous of you!

BELINDA.

Her Ladyſhip ſaw the little offices of civility I received from you this morning: ſhe miſunderſtood every thing, it ſeems, and has told the gentleman

uſt

Sir

with whom I was engaged in a treaty of marriage, that improper freedoms have paſſed between us.

Sir JOHN.

Artifice! artifice! her uſual policy, Madam, to cover her own libertine ways.

BELINDA.

I don't mean to ſay any thing harſh of the Lady. But you know what foundation there is for this, and I hope will do me juſtice.

Sir JOHN.

Oh! Madam, to the world, to the wide world I'll juſtify you. I will wait upon the gentleman. Who is he, Madam? What's his name?

BELINDA.

Beverley, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

Beverley!

BELINDA.

Yes, Sir; you ſeem ſurpriſed. Do you know him, Sir?

Sir JOHN.

Yes, yes, I know him; and he ſhall know me: my reſentment he ſhall feel; he ſhall be anſwerable to me.

BELINDA.

Anſwerable to you!

Sir JOHN.

To me, Madam. I told you at firſt this was her ſcheme to ſhelter herſelf; and he, I ſuppoſe, is combined with her to give this turn to the affair, and to charge me with infidelity. But you, Ma'am, can witneſs for me.

BELINDA.

I can, Sir: but can Mr. Beverley be capable of a diſhonourable action?

Sir JOHN.

That point is clear enough. He has injured me in the higheſt degree, deſtroyed my happineſs.

BELINDA.

How, Sir! are you ſure of this?

Sir JOHN.

He has given her his picture; I caught her with her eyes rivetted to it; I heard her admiration, her praiſes of it; her wiſhes that ſhe had been married to ſuch a man. I ſaw her print a thouſand kiſſes on it; and in the very fact I wreſted it out of her hand.

BELINDA.

If I imagined him capable of what you ſay, I ſhould ſcarcely be willing to join myſelf to him for life. Quarrel with me about his picture, and at the ſame time give it to another!

Sir JOHN.

Lady Reſtleſs had the picture. Without doubt, you muſt be very happy with a man of his gallantry.

BE-

BELINDA.

Happy, Sir! I ſhould be miſerable; diſtracted; I ſhould break my heart. But do you think you have ſufficient proof?

Sir JOHN.

I have ſeen him coming out of my houſe ſince, clandeſtinely, ſhunning every obſervant eye, with the characters of guilt in his face; and all the diſcourſe I had with him, ſerved only to convince me the more.

BELINDA.

Abandoned wretch! was this the love he profeſſed for me? Sir, I have only to hope you will vindicate me in this matter. I commend myſelf to your honour, and I thank you for this favour.

Sir JOHN.

Our evidences will mutually ſpeak for each other, and confound their dark deſigns. Madam, I take my leave.

BELINDA.

Sir, your moſt obedient.

Sir JOHN.

The gentleman ſhall feel my indignation.

BELINDA.

You cannot treat him too ſeverely.

Sir

Sir JOHN.

I will expoſe him, I promiſe you. Madam, your humble ſervant. [*Exit.*

BELINDA.

Oh! Mr. Beverley, could I have imagined this? Falſe! falſe man! and yet how ſhall I forget him! but I will make an effort, tho' it pierce me to the quick. I will tear him from my heart. This moment I will write to him, and forbid him to ſee me more. [*Exit.*

SCENE, *the* PARK.

Enter Sir JOHN.

Sir JOHN.

If I can procure ſufficient evidence, I ſhall bring the matter to a divorce, and make an example of them all. Would Marmalet were come: this is her time to a moment. If I can worm the ſecret out of her—Is not that ſhe yonder?—Not quite day-light enough to diſtinguiſh, but I think I perceive a perſon maſked. Hiſt! hiſt!—Mrs. Marmalet—ſhe comes this way: it is ſhe. Mrs. Marmalet, your ſervant.

Enter a perſon MASKED.

Sir JOHN.

You are very good, Mrs. Marmalet——

MASK.

Bleſs my heart, I am ſcared out of my ſenſes.

Sir

Sir JOHN.

What's the matter, pray? What's the matter?

MASK.

Oh Sir! I tremble like a leaf. I was accoſted in a rude manner by ſome gentlemen yonder; I can't ſtay here, let us go into your houſe, Sir; I beg you will.

Sir JOHN.

My houſe? Would not any other houſe do as well?

MASK.

Oh! no, Sir; not for the world.

Sir JOHN.

Why my wife is not at home, and ſo I think I may venture: not but I had rather it were elſewhere.

MASK.

Indeed, Sir John, I am frightened out of my ſenſes. You will do me a favour if you will take me into the houſe.

Sir JOHN.

Say no more: it ſhall be ſo. Robert——

ROBERT. (*opening the dooor*)

Is that Sir John?

Sir JOHN.

Your Lady is not at home, Robert, is ſhe?

Ro-

ROBERT.

No, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

Then do you go in, and take care that nobody ſees Mrs. Marmalet with me. Come, I'll ſhew you the way. [*Exeunt.*

Scene in Sir JOHN'*s Houſe.*

Enter TATTLE, *and* BEVERLEY:

TATTLE. (*as ſhe enters*)

Ay, poor lady! ſhe is unfortunate, indeed; and, poor gentleman, he is as jealous as my Lady to the full. There has been a deal to do about that picture you mention, Sir.

BEVERLEY.

That will be explained preſently: I'll wait till he comes home. I can't poſſibly go without ſpeaking to him.

TATTLE.

Indeed, you had better not ſtay, Sir. You don't conſider the miſchief your being in the houſe may occaſion.

BEVERLEY.

Miſchief! how do ye mean?

TATTLE.

Lord, Sir! I would not have you ſtay for the world: I would not indeed. You can call again in an

an hour, Sir, and you'll certainly find him at home, then. Bleſs my heart, Sir!—I fancy that's his voice. Do, dear Sir! you'll be the ruin of my Lady, If he ſees you here, Sir, waiting in his houſe: he'll be perſuaded you come after my Lady; the world will never beat it out of his head.

BEVERLEY.

But I ſhall give him to underſtand——

TATTLE.

He won't underſtand any thing. Oh Lud! oh! Lud! he's coming up: I'll run and look. [*Exit.*

BEVERLEY.

What a flurry the woman is in! a fooliſh jade! I muſt ſpeak with him now.

TATTLE. (*entering*)

It is he as I am alive, Sir; and there is a woman in a maſk with him.

BEVERLEY.

A woman in a maſk! Zoons, if that ſhould be Belinda! my mind miſgives me ſtrangely! (*aſide*)

TATTLE.

Do, dear Sir; you look like a good natured gentleman; let me hide you out of the way, Sir. You would not be the deſtruction of a poor ſervant.

BEVERLEY.

A maſk coming home with him! I muſt know who that is. I won't leave the houſe without knowing.

If

If I could conceal myſelf—have you any private place, Mrs. Tattle?

TATTLE.

That is the very thing I mean, Sir. Let me conceal you in that cloſet till he paſſes through this room. He never ſtays long here. It won't take you two minutes. Do, ſweet Sir, I'll down on my knees to you.

BEVERLEY.

I muſt know who it is. Come, diſpoſe of me as you will. If this ſhould be Belinda! *Exit.*

TATTLE.

Heavens bleſs you, Sir, for this goodneſs! I'll lock the door to make ſure work of it. I was never ſo frightened in my life. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir JOHN *and a perſon maſked.*

Sir JOHN.

Mrs. Marmalet, I am obliged to you for this favour. I wanted a word or two with you.

MASK.

So Robert informed me, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

Did he tell you my buſineſs?

MASK.

No, Sir.

Sir

Sir JOHN.

Look ye then: if you will gratify me in what I ſhall aſk, you may command any thing. Now you may be uncovered.

MASK.

La! Sir—I hear a noiſe: I am afraid ſomebody's coming: I ſhall be ſeen.

Sir JOHN.

Huſh! no; there's nobody. If you will indulge me on this occaſion, I am yours for ever. Here, here is a purſe of money for you.

MASK.

But if this ſhould come to the knowledge of your Lady, I am ruined and undone.

Sir JOHN.

No, no, I'll take care of you.

MASK.

Will you, Sir?

Sir JOHN.

I will. But come; let me remove this from your face.

MASK.

But ſomebody may come.

Sir JOHN.

I'll lock the door. There, now we are ſafe.

MASK.

MASK.

But in a little time you'll make up all quarrels with your lady, and I ſhall be ruined.

Sir JOHN.

No, no, never fear: I ſhall never be reconciled to her: I hate her; I deteſt her.

Lady RESTLESS.

Do you ſo, Sir? (*unmaſking*) Now, Sir John, what can you ſay now, Sir?

Sir JOHN.

My Lady Reſtleſs! Confuſion! what ſhall I ſay?

Lady RESTLESS.

Oh, Sir John! Sir John! what evaſion have you now, Sir? Can you deny your guilt any longer?

Sir JOHN.

This is unlucky. That villain Robert has betrayed me. I can't explain myſelf to her now. Try what ſoothing will do.—My Lady Reſtleſs, if you will but have patience, this matter ſhall be explained.

Lady RESTLESS.

Explained, Sir!

Sir JOHN.

Yes, my dear, explained, and——

Lady RESTLESS.

My dear, too! the aſſurance of you!

Sir JOHN.

I ſay, my dear, for I ſtill regard you; and this was all done to—to—cure you of your jealouſy: all done to cure you of your jealouſy.

Lady RESTLESS.

A fine way you have taken!

Sir JOHN.

Yes, yes; and ſo you will ſee preſently: all to convince you how groundleſs your ſuſpicions are; and then we ſhall live very happy together.

Lady RESTLESS.

Ay!

Sir JOHN.

I have no further ſuſpicions of you. I ſee my error, and I want you to ſee your's. Ha! ha!—I have no ſuſpicions: that will put her off her guard. (*aſide*) My dear, compoſe your ſpirits, and—

Lady RESTLESS.

And do you think to deny every thing even in the face of conviction? Baſe, baſe man! I'll go this moment and write to my brother.

Sir JOHN.

Now you talk wildly. This is all raving: you make yourſelf very ridiculous. You do, indeed. I had ſettled all this on purpoſe, and contrived that it ſhould come to your ears, and then I knew you would do juſt as you have done; and—then—I—I reſolved to do juſt as I have done; only to hint to you,

you, that liſteners ſeldom hear any good of themſelves, and to ſhew you how wrong it is to be too ſuſpicious, my dear: was it not well done?—ha! ha! ha!

Lady RESTLESS.

And do you laugh at me too, Sir? Make me your ſport? I'll go and get pen and ink this moment.

Sir JOHN.

Oh! do ſo, Ma'am; do ſo—ha! ha! you'll only expoſe yourſelf: go and write, Madam—ha! ha! ha!—

Lady RESTLESS.

I will, Sir. (*going*) The door is locked. This won't ſucceed, Sir. I ſuppoſe you have the key. Ay! I'll lay my life you have, and ſome one or other of your creatures is locked in there.

Sir JOHN.

There, again! This is of a piece with all your vain ſurmiſes. Ha! ha! you are mighty ſilly, indeed, you are.

Lady RESTLESS.

I will ſearch that cloſet. I am determined I will.

Sir JOHN.

Do ſo, Ma'am, do ſo. Ha! ha! I can't but laugh at her

Lady RESTLESS.

I'll have the door broke open, if you won't give me the key.

Sir JOHN.

Ha! ha! ha!—How you expoſe yourſelf.

Lady RESTLESS.

Will you give me the key, Sir?

Sir JOHN.

Ha! ha! ha! it is too ridiculous!

Lady RESTLESS.

Mighty well, Sir. Tattle!—who waits there? I will find out all your artifices. Tattle, I ſay.

Sir JOHN.

Tol de rol lol!—ha! ha! ha! a ſilly woman!

Enter TATTLE.

Lady RESTLESS.

Do you know any thing of the key of that cloſet, Tattle?

TATTLE.

The key, Ma'am! I have it, Ma'am.

Lady RESTLESS.

Give it to me.

TATTLE.

That is, I have it not, Ma'am. Don't have it, Ma'am, don't aſk for it. (*aſide to her*)

Lady RESTLESS.

Don't aſk for it! but I will have it. Give me the key this inſtant.

Sir JOHN.

How! is ſhe not willing to give it? There is ſomething in this, then. Give the key this moment, you jade, give it to me.

Lady RESTLESS.

You ſhan't have it, Sir. What, you want to hinder me! give the key to me.

TATTLE.

Dear heart! I have loſt it, Ma'am. Better not have it, Ma'am. (*aſide*)

Sir JOHN.

Give it to me this moment, I ſay.

Lady RESTLESS.

If you don't let me have it, it is as much as your place is worth.

TATTLE.

The devil is in it! there it is then. Let me make my eſcape. [*Exit.*

Lady RESTLESS.

Now, Sir, we ſhall ſee, now, now.

Sir JOHN.

Ay, now ſearch, if you will. (*laughing at her*)

Lady RESTLESS. (*unlocking the door*)

You ſhall be found out, I promiſe you—Oh! (*ſcreams out*)

Sir JOHN.

What's the matter now?

Lady RESTLESS.

Heavens! who have we here?

Sir JOHN.

Oh there is ſomebody there then!

Enter BEVERLEY.

BEVERLEY.

Madam——(*bows to her*)

Sir JOHN.

By all that's falſe, here he is again!

Lady RESTLESS.

What, in the name of wonder, brings you here, Sir?

Sir JOHN.

Oh Madam! you know his buſineſs, and I know his buſineſs; and the gentleman knows his buſineſs. There he is, Ma'am! there is the gentleman waiting for you; true to his appointment, you ſee. Sir, your humble ſervant. My Lady Reſtleſs, your humble ſervant. Now write to your brother; do. I ſhould be glad to know what you can ſay now. Now now; is the caſe plain now?

Lady

Lady RESTLESS.

I am in amaze! I don't know what to make of this.

BEVERLEY.

Sir, however odd this may appear——

Sir JOHN.

Ay! now ſettle it between yourſelves: give it what turn you will, Sir, ſhe will confirm it. You need not be afraid, Sir; you will agree in your ſtory; ſhe is quick of invention, and I dare ſay you are pretty quick too!

BEVERLEY.

Sir, I muſt beg you will put no forced conſtruction upon this matter.

Sir JOHN.

And you beg the ſame, Ma'am, don't you?

BEVERLEY.

Sir, I beg to be heard. My buſineſs here is to deſire you will return me the picture which you have in your poſſeſſion! it is now become dear to me, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

I dare ſay it is.

BEVERLEY.

And muſt be returned.

Sir JOHN.

It is of equal value to me. It ſhall riſe in evidence againſt you both.

Lady RESTLESS.

Evidence againſt me! explain yourſelf. How did you get in here? What's your buſineſs? What brought you hither? What's your errand?

Sir JOHN.

Ay, Sir, ſpeak; how did you get in here? What's your buſineſs? What brought you hither? What's your errand?

BEVERLEY.

Vexation! I am beſet by them both at once.

Lady RESTLESS.

Speak, Sir, explain.

Sir JOHN.

Ay! Sir, explain,

BEVERLEY.

Sir, if you will give me leave, I will ſatisfy you entirely. I aſſure you, Sir, and you too, Ma'am, that the liberty I have taken with your cloſet is entirely owing to your maid, Tattle.

Sir JOHN.

The jade, I don't doubt it, Sir.

BEVERLEY.

To prevent, if poſſible, the interpretation now put upon ſeeing me in this houſe.

Sir JOHN.

And it was well contrived, Sir. Oh! my Lady Reſtleſs.

Lady RESTLESS.

By all that's juſt, I knew nothing of it.

BEVERLEY.

Nothing, upon my honour, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

Oh! I knew you would both agree.

BEVERLEY.

As I am a gentleman, I tell you the real fact.

Sir JOHN.

You need not, Sir: I know the real fact.

BEVERLEY.

I have no time to loſe in frivolous altercation: I muſt now deſire the picture, directly.

Sir JOHN.

I wiſh you a good evening.

BE-

BEVERLEY.

I ſhall not ſtir without it. I ſhould be glad you would comply without a quarrel. I muſt be obliged to—

Sir JOHN.

Ay! now her prize-fighter begins. (*aſide*) I deſire you will quit my houſe, Sir.

BEVERLEY.

I am not to be trifled with. If you don't return it by fair means, I ſhall be forced to draw.

Sir JOHN.

There again now! ſhe has ſet him on to cut my throat: But I will diſappoint her. She is a worthleſs woman, and I won't fight about her. There, Sir, there is your trinket. I ſhall have proof ſufficient without it.

BEVERLEY.

Upon my honour, Sir, you will have no proof of any tranſgreſſion of mine. If you ſuſpect your lady from theſe appearances, you wrong her much, I aſſure you.

Lady RESTLESS.

Sir, I deſire you will explain all this.

BEVERLEY.

Call up your maid, Madam, and then——

Sir

Sir JOHN.

No, Sir, no more of it. I am ſatisfied. I wiſh you good night.

BEVERLEY.

When you are willing to liſten to reaſon, I ſhall be ready to convince you of your error. Madam, you may depend I ſhall do juſtice to your honour upon all occaſions. And now I take my leave.

[*Exit.*

Sir JOHN.

Now, my Lady Reſtleſs, now! you are thoroughly known! all your artifices are known; Mr. Beverley is known! my Lord Conqueſt is known.

Lady RESTLESS.

My Lord Conqueſt, Sir! I deſpiſe all your imputations. My Lord Conqueſt's maid, Sir! what can you ſay to that?

Sir JOHN.

Very well, Madam! 'tis now my turn to write to your brother, and I promiſe you I will do it.

Lady RESTLESS.

You will write, Sir! you will write! Well! his aſſurance is unequalled. (*aſide*) You will write! That is pleaſant indeed!—write, Sir; do; you will only expoſe your weakneſs—ha! ha! you make yourſelf very ridiculous! you do indeed!—ha! ha!

Sir

Sir JOHN.

'Sdeath! Madam, am I to be inſulted with a contumelious laugh into the bargain!

Lady RESTLESS.

Why, my dear, this was all done—to—to—to—cure you of your jealouſy; for I knew you would act as you have done, and ſo I reſolved to do as I have done. Was it not well done, my dear,? Ha! ha!

Sir JOHN.

Damnation! this is too much: it is beyond all patience.

Lady RESTLESS.

Ha! ha! ha! the tables are turned, I think *(ſings and laughs.)*

Sir JOHN.

Let me tell you, it is no laughing matter. You are a vile woman; I know you, and the world ſhall know you: I promiſe you it ſhall.

Lady RESTLESS.

I am clear in my own conviction, and your ſlander I deſpiſe: nor ſhall your artifices blind me or my friends any longer. Sir, as you ſay, it is no laughing matter. I promiſe you, you ſhall never diſhonour me again in this houſe.

Sir JOHN.

And I promiſe you, Madam, that you ſhall never diſhonour me in any houſe.

Lady

Lady RESTLESS.

Injurious, falſe, perfidious man!

Sir JOHN.

Deceitful, wanton! wanton woman!

[*Exeunt, at oppoſite doors.*

End of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT

ACT the FIFTH.

Scene an Apartment at Mr. BLANDFORD'S.

Enter BELINDA.

BELINDA.

UNgenerous, falſe, deceitful Beverley! under that fair appearance could I imagine that he harboured ſo much treachery? Attached to Lady Reſtleſs; engaged in a diſhonourable intrigue with the wife of another, and yet profeſſing an affection for me, with ardour profeſſing it, and for me only! he is likely to regard the honour of the marriage-bed, who is ready to commit a treſpaſs on the happineſs of his neighbour. It was Providence ſent Sir John Reſtleſs to pay me a viſit. The whole is now brought to light, and, Mr. Beverley, I have done with you for ever. I ſhall now obey my father's commands. By giving my hand to Sir William Bellmont's ſon, I ſhall puniſh an undeſerving libertine for his treachery.

Enter TIPPET.

BELINDA.

Well, Tippet, have you done as I ordered you?

TIPPET.

I have, Madam.

BE-

BELINDA.

The perfidious man! did you ever know ſuch behaviour?

TIPPET.

He is a traitor, like the reſt of them.

BELINDA.

After all the regard I profeſſed for him! after ſo many ardent vows and proteſtations as he has made me!

TIPPET.

The hours that he has ſighed away at your feet!

BELINDA.

I will baniſh him from my thoughts. My reſolution is fixed, and ſo I have told my father. Is Sir William Bellmont with him?

TIPPET.

He is, Ma'am: they are both in cloſe talk: they are over their glaſs, and are ſo overjoyed at the change of your mind.

BELINDA.

And I applaud myſelf for what I have done.—Oh! Mr. Beverley! you have forced me to this extremity.—Here, take this letter, Tippet, and give it to him with your own hands.

TIPPET.

He ſhall have it. (*takes the letter*)

BE-

BELINDA.

Where are all his letters?

TIPPET.

Here, Ma'am. *(ſhews a parcel)*

BELINDA.

The bracelets, and the pocket book?

TIPPET.

I have them ſafe.

BELINDA.

Very well: take his preſents home to him; and do you hear? Bring me back all the fooliſh letters I writ to him.

TIPPET.

Never doubt me: I won't quit the houſe without them. Exchange is all fair.

BELINDA.

That letter will tell him, that though I now break with him in a manner, that may ſeem abrupt, his character and conduct have compelled me to it. Be ſure you confirm that to him.

TIPPET.

He ſhall hear it all, and roundly too.

BELINDA.

Very well; you may go.—Tippet,—aſk his man.—as if from yourſelf,—careleſsly,—as it were by accident,

cident,---whether his maſter has talked of me? And what he ſaid, Tippet?

TIPPET.

I know Mr. Bruſh: I can wheedle it out of him, I warrant me.

BELINDA.

Get at the particulars: not that I care: I don't want to know any thing about the ungrateful man. It does not concern me now. My fooliſh weakneſs is over: let him care as little for me as I do for him: you may tell him ſo.

TIPPET.

Your meſſage ſhan't loſe in the carrying.

BELINDA.

Well, that's all: you may begone.

TIPPET.

Yes, Ma'am. *(going)*

BELINDA.

Mind what I have ſaid.

TIPPET.

You may truſt to me. *(going)*

BELINDA.

Don't forget a word of it.

TIPPET.

No, not a ſyllable. *(going)*

BELINDA.

And hark ye: tell him how eaſy, how compoſed I am. That will gall him. You ſee, Tippet, I am quite unconcerned. *(forcing a ſmile)*

TIPPET.

Yes, Ma'am: you don't ſeem to fret in the leaſt.

BELINDA.

It is eaſy to perceive that I am not all diſconcerted. You may ſee how gay I am upon the occaſion. (*affecting to laugh*)

TIPPET. (*laughing*)

Oh! yes, Ma'am: you make quite a laughing matter of it.

BELINDA.

Very true: a perfect air of indifference!---Well, I have done.---Tell him that upon no account will I ever exchange a word with him; that I will never hear of him; never think of him; never ſee him; and never, upon any conſideration, admit the ſmalleſt intercourſe; no, never; I will have no more to do with him.

TIPPET.

I have my leſſon, Ma'am, and I am glad you are ſo reſolved upon it. (*going*)

Enter a SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Mr. Beverley, Madam.

TIP-

TIPPET.

You muſt not let him up ſtairs: my Lady will never ſee his face.

BELINDA.

Yes, I think I may ſee him: ſhew him up. I will ſee him once more, and tell him all myſelf. It will come better from me, Tippet.

TIPPET.

Yes, Ma'am, you will do it with a better grace; and your reſolution will melt away like a bit of ſugar in your mouth.

BELINDA.

My reſolution is not to be altered: you may withdraw, Tippet.

TIPPET.

Yes, Ma'am.——Ah! ſhe has a hankering after him ſtill. [*Exit.*

BELINDA.

I ſhall now take my leave of him.---But then, my friend Clariſſa! can I rob her of her lover? She has not deſerved it at my hands. Though Mr. Beverley has deceived me, muſt I be falſe to honour, and to friendſhip?

Enter BEVERLEY.

BEVERLEY.

Belinda! how gladly do I once again behold——

BELINDA.

And with what reſentment have not I reaſon to behold, Sir——

BEVERLEY.

You have, Belinda; you have reaſon I grant it: forgive the raſh words my folly uttered.

BELINDA.

Miſtake me not, Sir: it is not your words I quarrel with: your actions, Mr. Beverley, your actions, Sir!

BEVERLEY.

They are not to be extenuated: but ſurely, after the letter you honoured me with——

BELINDA.

Sir, I have heard every thing ſince I was guilty of that folly.

BEVERLEY.

Heard! what?

BELINDA.

Diſſemble if you will: but this muſt be the laſt of our converſing together. My maid will return you whatever I have received from you: all my ſilly letters I muſt deſire you to deliver to her; and then viſit me no more, Sir.

BEVERLEY.

Belinda!---you will not wound me thus. Here is the picture which cauſed that unlucky miſtake between

tween us. I have recovered it from Sir John Reſtleſs.

BELINDA.

From my Lady Reſtleſs, Sir?

BEVERLEY.

Madam!

BELINDA.

Oh! fie, Sir; no more; I have done.

BEVERLEY.

You muſt, you muſt accept it. Thus on my knees I beg you. Will you, Belinda? (*takes her hand*)

BELINDA.

Leave me, Sir: let go my hand, Mr. Beverley: your falſehood——

BEVERLEY.

My falſehood! By all the ——

BELINDA.

Your falſehood, Sir: Sir John Reſtleſs has told me all; every circumſtance.

BEVERLEY.

He has told you! what has he told? His life ſhall anſwer it.

BELINDA.

You have deſtroyed my peace of mind for ever.

Nay, you yourſelf have forced me into the arms of another.

BEVERLEY.

What do I hear?

BELINDA.

My Lady Reſtleſs will rejoice at the news: the event will not be unpleaſing to her; but ſhe is welcome: let her enjoy her triumph.

BEVERLEY.

You aſtoniſh me, Belinda: what does all this mean?

BELINDA.

It means, that, in obedience to the commands of a father, I have agreed to marry Mr. Bellmont.

BEVERLEY.

Mr. Bellmont!---him!---marry him! it is very well, Ma'am: I expected it would come to this, and my Lady Reſtleſs is only mentioned on this occaſion, as a retort for my accuſation about Sir John. I underſtand it; and, by Heaven! I believe that whole ſtory.

BELINDA.

You do, Sir!

BEVERLEY.

I do: fool that I was to humble myſelf to you. My pride is now piqued, and I am glad, Madam, as glad as you can be, to break off for ever.

BELINDA.

Oh! Sir, I can be as indifferent on my part. You have only to ſend me back my letters, and——

BEVERLEY.

Agreed, agreed. I'll go home this moment, and ſend them all. Before I go, Madam, here is your own picture, which you had given me with your own hands. Mr. Bellmont will be glad of it; or Sir John Reſtleſs will be glad of it; or any body will be glad of it: you need not be at a loſs.

BELINDA.

Very like, Sir. (*takes the picture*) Tyrant, tyrant man! to treat me in this barbarous manner. (*cries*)

BEVERLEY.

Tears! Belinda! (*approaching*)—Belinda!

BELINDA.

No more of your inſidious arts. I will hear no more. Oh! my heart, my heart will break. I did not think it was in your nature to behave as you have done; but—farewel for ever. [*Exit.*

BEVERLEY.

Belinda! hear me but ſpeak. By Heaven, my Lady Reſtleſs—She is gone: 'ſdeath! I have been duped by her all this time; I will now ſummon up all that is man within me, and in my turn deſpiſe her.

Enter TIPPET.

TIPPET.

If you are going home, Sir, I will take the things with me now.

BEVERLEY.

Yes, I am going: I will leave this deteſted——

TIPPET.

This abominable place, Sir. (*laughing at him*)

BEVERLEY.

This hell!

TIPPET.

Ha! ha!—ay! Sir, this hell.

BEVERLEY.

This manſion of perfidy, ingratitude, and fraud.

TIPPET.

Very right, Sir, let us go.

BEVERLEY.

And yet—Tippet, you muſt not ſtir. Indulge me but a little. It is all a miſunderſtanding, this.

TIPPET.

My lady will have no more to ſay to you. You may take the things, Sir: my lady reſigns them to you, Sir.

BE-

BEVERLEY.

Oh! Tippet, uſe your intereſt with her. Keep them in the houſe till I return. I will clear up this whole matter preſently. I muſt not loſe her thus. [*Exit.*

TIPPET.

Poor gentleman! he ſeems in a lamentable way. Well, I fancy for my part he is a true lover after all; that's what I do; and my young lady, I fear, is——

Enter BELINDA.

TIPPET.

Madam, Madam, Madam, you are to blame; you are, indeed.

BELINDA.

Is he gone?

TIPPET.

He is, Ma'am.

BELINDA.

Did he ſay any thing? Was he uneaſy? Or did he carry it off with a——

TIPPET.

Oh! Madam, he went away ſighing ſhort, his heart throbbing, his eyes brimful, his looks pale: you are to blame, you are, indeed, Madam. I dare be ſworn he has never proved falſe.

BE-

BELINDA.

Oh! Tippet, could I be ſure of that!

TIPPET.

But you are not ſure of the contrary. Why won't you ſee my Lady Reſtleſs? See her directly, Madam; go to her now before it is too late; before the old folks, who are putting their heads together, have ſettled the whole affair. Dear Ma'am, be adviſed. I hear them coming. They will hurry you into a match, and you'll repent of it. How cruel this is! Here they come.—No, it's Madam Clariſſa.

Enter CLARISSA.

CLARISSA.

Belinda; you have thrown things into fine confuſion. You have involved yourſelf, and my brother, and Mr. Bellmont, and every body in moſt terrible difficulties.

BELINDA.

My dear Clariſſa, here have been ſuch doings be-your brother and me.

CLARISSA.

So I find. I met him as I came hither. You have had fine doings indeed. I have heard the whole; my brother has told me every thing.

TIPPET.

Madam, Madam; I hear your father, Sir William Bellmont is with him: they are coming up ſtairs.

Re-

BELINDA.

I am not in a diſpoſition to ſee them now. Clariſſa ſuſpend your judgment; ſtep with me to my own room, and I will then give you ſuch reaſons as, you will own yourſelf, ſufficiently juſtify my conduct.

CLARISSA.

The reaſons muſt be ingenious, that can make any kind of apology for ſuch behaviour: I ſhall be glad to hear you.

BELINDA.

Very well, follow me quickly. You will find that my reſolution is not ſo raſh as you imagine.

[*Exit with* CLARISSA.

TIPPET.

They have got into a rare puzzle; and how they will get out of it, is beyond my dexterity; and ſo let 'em manage as well as they can.

Enter BLANDFORD, Sir WILLIAM, *and* Young BELLMONT.

BLANDFORD.

Sir William, we have made a good day's work of it: the writings will be ready to-morrow morning. Where is Belinda? I thought ſhe was in this room.

TIPPET.

She is gone to her own room, Sir: ſhe is not well.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

She has changed her mind, perhaps: I ſhall have no faith in this buſineſs, till it is all concluded.

BLANDFORD.

Changed her mind, ſay you? No, no; I can depend upon her. I'll bring her to you this moment, and you and your ſon ſhall hear a declaration of her mind out of her own lips. Tippet, where is Belinda?

TIPPET.

I'll ſhew you the way, Sir. [*Exit with Blandford.*

Sir WILLIAM.

Now we ſhall ſee what authority you have over your daughter. I have your promiſe, George: if ſhe conſents, you will be ready to comply with the wiſhes of your father.

BELLMONT.

Sir,—you may depend, that is as far as matters are in my power: but you know, as I told you already, the lady has a ſettled, rooted averſion to me.

Sir WILLIAM.

Averſion!—ſhe can change her mind, can't ſhe? Women have no ſettled principle. They like to-day, and diſlike to-morrow. Beſides, has not her father promiſed her to you in marriage? If the old gentleman likes you, what have you to do with her averſion?

BELL-

BELLMONT.

To do with it? A great deal, I am afraid. You are not now to learn, that, when a young lady marries againſt her inclination, billet-doux, aſſignations, plots, intrigues, and a terrible *et cætera* of female ſtratagem, mount into her brain, and the poor huſband in the mean time—

Sir WILLIAM.

Come, lad, don't play the rogue with your father. Did not you promiſe me, if ſhe made no objection, that there would be no obſtacle on your part?

BELLMONT.

I promiſed to be ſure, but yet I can't help thinking—

Sir WILLIAM.

And I can't help thinking that you know how to equivocate. Look you, George, your words were plain downright Engliſh, and I expect that you will perform to the very letter. I have fixed my heart upon this match. Mr. Blandford and I have paſſed the day at the Crown and Rolls to read over the deeds. I have been dining upon parchment as I may ſay. I now tell you once for all, you muſt be obſervant of my will and pleaſure.

BELLMONT.

To end all diſpute, Sir, if the lady—*(aſide)* She will never conſent; I may ſafely promiſe.—If the lady, Sir, can at once forget her engagements with my friend Beverley——

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

You will then forget Clariſſa: fairly ſpoken. Come, I am ſatisfied. And now, now we ſhall ſee.

Enter BLANDFORD.

BLANDFORD.

Sir William give me joy: every thing goes as I wiſh. My daughter is a complying girl. She is ready to obey my commands. Clariſſa is with her, beſeeching, wrangling; complaining, ſoothing; now in a rage, and now in tears; one moment expoſtulating, and the next imploring; but all in vain; Belinda holds her reſolution; and ſo young gentleman you are now completely happy.

BELLMONT.

Death to my hopes! can this be true? (*aſide*)

BLANDFORD.

Sir William give me your hand upon it. This will not only be a match of prudence, but of inclination.

Sir WILLIAM.

There, George, there is news for you: your buſineſs is done.

BLANDFORD.

She owns very frankly that her heart has been hitherto fixed upon a worthleſs man: ſhe renounces him for ever, and is willing to give her hand as I ſhall direct.

BELL-

BELLMONT.

What a dilemma am I brought into? (*aſide*)

Sir WILLIAM.

George, what's the matter, boy? You a bride-groom? Wounds! at your age I could cut a caper over the moon upon ſuch an occaſion.

BELLMONT.

I am more ſlack-mettled, Sir: I cannot leap quite ſo high.

Sir WILLIAM.

A cup too low, I fancy. Let us go and finiſh our bottle. Belinda ſhall be my toaſt. I'll give you her health in a bumper. Come, Mr. Blandford: I want to waſh down the cobwebs of the law. [*Exit.*

BLANDFORD.

I attend you, Sir William.—Mr. Bellmont, follow us: we muſt have your company: you are under par: come, we will raiſe you a note higher.

[*Exit.*

BELLMONT.

You have ſunk me ſo low, that I ſhall never recover myſelf. This behaviour of Belinda's!—— Can ſhe think her treachery to one lover will recommend her to another?

Enter CLARISSA.

CLARISSA.

Mr. Bellmont, I wiſh you joy, Sir. Belinda has con-

ſented; and you have done the ſame. You are both conſenting. The match is a very proper one. You will be finely paired.

BELLMONT.

You are miſinformed, Clariſſa; why will you do me this injuſtice?

CLARISSA.

Injuſtice! Mr. Blandford has reported every thing: he has done you juſtice: he has told us how eaſily you have been perſuaded: don't imagine that I am hurt. I reſign all pretenſions: I can be prevailed upon with as much eaſe as you, Sir: I can copy the eaſy compliance of Mr. Bellmont.

BELLMONT.

If you will but hear me: moderate your anger.

CLARISSA.

Anger!—anger indeed! I ſhould be ſorry any thing that has happened were of conſequence enough to diſturb my peace of mind.—Anger!—I ſhall die with laughing at the thought. You may be falſe to your friends, Sir; falſe to your vows; you may break every ſolemn engagement; Mr. Blandford wiſhes it; Belinda wiſhes it; and why ſhould not you comply? Follow the dictates of your heart, Sir.

BELLMONT.

Whatever has happened, Clariſſa, I am not to blame.

CLARISSA.

I dare ſay not; and here is a lady will ſay the ſame.

Enter

Enter BELINDA.

BELINDA.

Spare your reproaches, Clariſſa.—Mr. Bellmont, you too may ſpare me. The agitations of my mind diſtreſs me ſo, I know not which way to turn myſelf. The provocation I have had——

CLARISSA.

Provocation, Madam!—from whom?

BELINDA.

From your brother: you need not queſtion me; you know what his conduct has been.

BELLMONT.

By Heaven you wrong him; and ſo you will find in the end.

CLARISSA.

Your own conduct, Madam! will that ſtand as clear as my brother's? My Lady Reſtleſs, I believe, has ſomething to ſay. It will become you to refute that charge.

BELINDA.

Downright malice, my dear: but I excuſe you for the preſent.

Enter TIPPET.

TIPPET. (*to Belinda*)

Your chair is ready, Ma'am.

BELINDA.

Very well: I have not a moment to loſe: I am determined to know the bottom of this whole affair. Clariſſa, when I return, you will be better diſpoſed to hear me.

CLARISSA.

You need not trouble yourſelf, Ma'am: I am perfectly ſatisfied.——Tippet, will you be ſo good as to order my chair?

BELINDA.

Well; ſuſpend your judgement. This buſineſs is of importance: I muſt leave you now.

[*Exit with Tippet.*

BELLMONT.

Clariſſa, if you knew how all this wounds me to the heart.

CLARISSA.

Oh! keep your reſolution; go on with your very honourable deſign: inclination ſhould be conſulted; and the neceſſity of the caſe, you know, will excuſe you to the world.

BELLMONT.

Command your temper, and the whole ſhall be explained.

CLARISSA.

It wants no explanation: it is too clear already.

BELL-

BELLMONT.

A moment's patience would ſet every thing right.—'Sdeath! one would imagine that Lad Reſtleſs had been ſpeaking to you too. This is like the reſt of them: downright jealouſy!

CLARISSA.

Jealouſy!—Upon my word, Sir, you are of great conſequence to yourſelf: but you ſhall find that I can with perfect ſerenity baniſh you, and your Belinda, entirely from my thoughts.

Enter TIPPET.

TIPPET.

The chairmen are in the hall, Ma'am.

BELLMONT.

Let me but ſpeak to you.

CLARISSA.

No, Sir: I have done: I ſhall quit this houſe immediately. (*going*) Mrs. Tippet, could you let me have pen, ink, and paper, in your lady's room?

TIPPET.

Every thing is ready there, Ma'am.

CLARISSA.

Very well:—I'll go and write a letter to Belinda. I'll tell her my mind, and then adieu to all of you.

[*Exit with Tippet.*

BELLMONT.

How perverſe and obſtinate!

Enter Sir WILLIAM.

Sir WILLIAM.

Well, George, every thing is ſettled.

BELLMONT.

Why really, Sir, I don't know what to ſay. I wiſh you would conſider——

Sir WILLIAM.

At your tricks again?

BELLMONT.

I am above an attempt to deceive you: but if all circumſtances were known—I am not fond of ſpeaking detractingly of a young lady; but for the honour of your family, Sir, let us deſiſt from this match.

Sir WILLIAM.

Roguery, lad! there's roguery in this.

BELLMONT.

I ſee you will force me to ſpeak out. If there is, unhappily, a flaw in Belinda's reputation——

Sir WILLIAM.

How?

BELL-

BELLMONT.

This is no time to diſſemble. In ſhort, Sir, my Lady Reſtleſs, a worthy lady here in the neighbourhood, has diſcovered a connection between her and Sir John Reſtleſs; Sir John and Lady Reſtleſs lived in perfect harmony till this affair broke out. The peace of the family is now deſtroyed. The whole is come to the knowledge of my friend Beverley: with tears in his eyes, with a bleeding heart, (for he loved Belinda tenderly) he has at laſt muſtered up reſolution, and taken his final leave.

Sir WILLIAM.

Ay! can this be true?

BELLMONT.

It is but too true; I am ſorry to report it. And now, Sir, judge yourſelf—Oh!—here comes Mr. Blandford: 'tis a dreadful ſcene to open to him; a terrible ſtory for the ear of a father! You had beſt take no notice: we need not be acceſſary to a young lady's ruin: it is a family affair, and we may leave them to patch it up among themſelves, as well as they can.

Sir WILLIAM.

If theſe things are ſo, why then the caſe is altered.

Enter BLANDFORD.

BLANDFORD.

Hey! what's in the wind now? You two look as grave! what's come over you? For my part, my ſpirits are above proof with joy: I am in love with

my daughter for her compliance, and I fancy I ſhall throw in an odd thouſand more, to enliven the honey-moon.

Sir WILLIAM.

Mr. Blandford, we are rather in a hurry, I think. We had better not precipitate matters.

BLANDFORD.

Nay, if you are for changing your mind—Look you, Sir; my daughter ſhall not be trifled with. Where is ſhe? Where is my girl? Who anſwers there?

Enter TIPPET.

BLANDFORD.

Where's Belinda?

TIPPET.

She is not gone far, Sir: juſt ſtept out upon a moment's buſineſs to Sir John Reſtleſs.

Sir WILLIAM.

Gone to Sir John Reſtleſs! (*aſide*)

BELLMONT.

You ſee, Sir. (*to Sir William*)

BLANDFORD.

I did not think ſhe knew Sir John.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

Yes, ſhe knows him: ſhe has been acquainted with him for ſome time paſt.

BLANDFORD.

What freak has ſhe got in her head? She is not gone after her Mr. Beverley, I hope. Zookers! this has an odd appearance. I don't like it: I'll follow her this moment.

Sir WILLIAM.

You are right: I'll attend you.—Now George, this will explain every thing. (*aſide*)—Come, Mr. Blandford, this may be an eſcape: young birds will wing their flight.

BLANDFORD.

Well, well, ſay no more: we ſhall ſee how it is. Come, Sir William: it is but a ſtep. [*Exit.*

BELLMONT. (*to Tippet*)

Where is Clariſſa?

Sir WILLIAM. (*looking back*)

What loitering, George?

BELLMONT.

I follow you, Sir. (*Exit Sir William*) Clariſſa is not gone, I hope.

TIPPET.

Gone, Sir!—She is writing, and crying, and wip-

ing her eyes, and tearing her paper, and beginning again, and in ſuch a piteous way!

BELLMONT.

I muſt ſee her: ſhe muſt come with us. If Lady Reſtleſs perſiſts in her ſtory, who knows what turn this affair may take? Come; Mrs. Tippet, ſhew me the way. [*Exeunt.*

Scene the Hall in the Houſe of Sir JOHN RESTLESS: *a loud rap at the door; and enter* ROBERT.

ROBERT.

What a hurry you are in there?—This is my Lady, I ſuppoſe. Where can ſhe have been?—Now for more confuſion. If ſhe finds Madam Belinda with Sir John, we are all blown up again.

Sir JOHN. (*peeping in*)

Robert, Robert: is that your Lady?

ROBERT.

Mercy on us! She is coming, I believe, Sir. (*looks out*) I ſee her chair: it is my Lady.

Sir JOHN.

Don't let her know that Belinda is in the houſe.

ROBERT.

Not if I can help it. Truſt to me, Sir. (*Exit Sir John*) Here ſhe comes. What has ſhe been about?

A Chair

A Chair is brought into the Hall.

Lady RESTLESS. (*coming out of the Chair*)
Is Sir John at home!

ROBERT.
I fancy he is, my Lady.

Lady RESTLESS.
Has any body been with him?

ROBERT.
He has been all alone, writing letters in his ſtudy: he deſired not to be interrupted.

Lady RESTLESS.
I ſhall not interrupt him, I promiſe him. You never will tell me any thing, Robert: I don't care who comes after him. To-morrow I ſhall quit this houſe, and then he may riot in licentious pleaſure. If he aſks for me, I am not well; I am gone to my own apartment: I hope to ſee no more of him. (*going*)

CHAIRMAN.
Shall your Ladyſhip want the chair any more to-night?

Lady RESTLESS.
I don't know what I ſhall want. Leave the chair there: you may wait. [*Exit.*

CHAIRMAN.
Ay! always a waiting job.
(*puts the chair aſide; Exeunt Chairman, and Robert.*)

Enter

Enter Sir JOHN *and* BELINDA.

BELINDA.

If you will but permit me to ſay a word to her—

Sir JOHN.

Excuſe me for the preſent: I beg you will.

BELINDA.

A ſhort interview with Lady Reſtleſs might clear up all my doubts: what objection can you have?

Sir JOHN.

A million of objections. You do not know the conſequence of being ſeen in this houſe. She will interpret every thing her own way. I am unhappy, Madam, while you ſtay.

BELINDA.

There is more cruelty in your refuſal than you can imagine. Mr. Beverley's character is in queſtion: it is of the laſt importance to me to know the whole truth.

Sir JOHN.

You know it all, Madam. Mr. Beverley's character is too clear. Proofs thicken, and grow ſtronger every hour. Since the viſit I paid you this very day, I have made another diſcovery. I found him lurking here in my houſe.

BELINDA.

Found him here, Sir?

Sir

Sir JOHN.

Found him here. He was lying in ambuſh for another amorous meeting.

BELINDA.

If there is no miſtake in this buſineſs——

Sir JOHN.

Miſtake! May I truſt my own eyes? I ſaw him; I ſpoke to him; I taxed him with his guilt. He was concealed in her cloſet: does that amount to proof? Her maid Tattle ſtationed him there. My Lady was privy to it: ſhe favoured the ſtratagem. Are you ſatisfied now, Madam?

BELINDA.

The particulars of this diſcovery, Sir John, may convince me: tell me all, Sir: you will oblige me.

Sir JOHN.

Enquire no more for the preſent. You will oblige me, Madam. Robert ſhall ſee you ſafe home. I would not have my Lady find us together: I think I hear her: no, no. In a day or two the particulars will be known to the wide world. Where is Robert?—He ſhall conduct you home. My peace and happineſs require it.

BELINDA.

My peace and happineſs are deſtroyed for ever. If your ſtory be true—

Sir

Sir JOHN.

It is too true: I wiſh you a good night. I am miſerable while you are here.—Robert

BELINDA.

Deliver me! I am ruined. I hear my father's voice: what brings him hither? I am undone if he finds me. Let me retire into that room.

Sir. JOHN.

That room will not do: you will be ſeen there.

BELINDA.

Can't I go up ſtairs? (*going*)

Sir JOHN.

No; I am ruined, if you go that way.—Hell and diſtraction!—My Lady Reſtleſs coming down! Here, Madam, here; into that chair. You will be concealed there: nobody will ſuſpect you.

BELINDA.

Any where, Sir: put me any where, to avoid this impending ſtorm. (*goes into the chair*)

Sir JOHN. (*ſhutting the chair*)

This is lucky. I am ſafe now. Let my Lady come as ſoon as ſhe will.

Enter Lady RESTLESS.

Lady RESTLESS.

I only wanted to ſay one word, Sir.

Enter

Enter BLANDFORD.

BLANDFORD.

Sir John, I am obliged to intrude: I am told my daughter is here.

Lady RESTLESS.

There! he has heard it all.

BLANDFORD.

I have heard that Belinda came to your houſe: on what buſineſs, I do not know. I hope, Sir John, that you do not harbour the girl to diſturb the peace and happineſs of a father.

Sir JOHN.

That imputation, Sir——

Lady RESTLESS.

He does harbour her.

Sir JOHN.

Mr. Blandford, I give you my honour——

Lady RESTLESS.

I know he does. He has ruined your daughter; he has injured you, Sir, as well as me in the moſt eſſential point.

Sir JOHN.

She raves; ſhe is mad. If you liſten to her——

Enter

Enter Sir WILLIAM, *and* BEVERLEY.

BLANDFORD.

I am glad you are come, Sir William. This more than I expected.

Sir JOHN.

And more than I expected. There, Madam, there is your favourite again!

BEVERLEY.

My visit is public, Sir. I come to demand, in the presence of this company, an explanation of the mischief you have done me.

Sir JOHN.

You need not be so public, Sir. The closet is ready for you: Tattle will turn the key, and you will there be very safe.

Lady RESTLESS.

How can you persist in such a fallacy? He knows, he perfectly well knows it was an accident; a mere blunder of the servant, entirely unknown to me.

Sir JOHN.

She was privy to the whole.

BLANDFORD.

This is beside my purpose. I came hither in quest of my daughter: a father demands her. Is she here? Is she in the house.

Sir

Sir JOHN.

In this houſe, Sir? Our families never viſited. I am not acquainted with her.

Lady RESTLESS.

He is acquainted with her. I ſaw him claſp her in his arms.

BLANDFORD.

In his arms! When? Where? Tell me all.

Lady RESTLESS.

Yes, now let him give an account of himſelf.

Sir JOHN.

When you have accounted for your actions, Madam——

Lady RESTLESS.

Render an account to the lady's father, Sir.

BLANDFORD.

Yes, to her father. Account with me, Sir. When and where was all this?

Lady RESTLESS.

This very day; at noon; in the Park.

BEVERLEY.

But in the eyes of the whole world: I know Belinda: I can acquit her.

Sir

Sir JOHN.

And I proclaim her innocence. We can both acquit her. *(goes up to Beverley)*

Lady RESTLESS.

You are both in a plot: both combined.

Sir JOHN.

It was all harmleſs; all inoffenſive. Was not it Mr. Beverley?

BEVERLEY.

Yes, all, all.

Lady RESTLESS.

All guilt; manifeſt, downright guilt.

Sir WILLIAM.

If you all talk together, we ſhall never underſtand.

BEVERLEY.

I underſtand it all.—Mr. Blandford you met Belinda in the Park this morning?

BLANDFORD.

I did, Sir.

BEVERLEY.

You accoſted her violently: the harſhneſs of your language overpowered her ſpirits: ſhe was ready to faint: Sir John was paſſing by: ſhe was going to drop down: Sir John aſſiſted her: that is the whole of the ſtory. Injured as I am, I muſt do juſtice to Belinda's

da's character. She may treat me with the caprice and pride of insolent beauty; but her virtue claims respect.

Sir JOHN.

There now; there! that is the whole of the story.

Lady RESTLESS.

The whole of the story! no, Sir John: you shall suppress nothing: you could receive a picture from her.

Sir JOHN.

You, Madam, could receive a picture; and you, Mr. Beverley, could present it.

Lady RESTLESS.

Mr. Beverley, you hear this!

BEVERLEY.

I can justify you, Madam. I gave your Lady no picture, Sir John.

Sir JOHN.

She had it in her hand. I saw her print her kisses on it, and in that moment I seized it from her.

BEVERLEY.

Belinda dropt it in the Park, when she was taken ill: I had just given it to her. Your Lady found it there.

Lady RESTLESS.

I found it on that very spot.

BEVERLEY.

There, Sir; ſhe found it.

Sir JOHN.

I found you locked up in her cabinet; concealed in private.

Lady RESTLESS.

But with no bad intent.

Sir JOHN.

With the worſt intent.

BEVERLEY.

Your jealouſy, Sir John, has fixed an imputation upon me, who have not deſerved it: and your ſuſpicions, Madam, have fallen, like a blaſting mildew, upon a lady, whoſe name was never before ſullied by the breath of calumny.

Sir WILLIAM.

The affair is clear as to your daughter, Mr. Blandford. I am ſatisfied, and now we need not intrude any longer upon this family. (*Enter Bellmont and Clariſſa.*) Walk in, George: every thing is right: your fears may now go to reſt.

Lady RESTLESS.

I ſhall not ſtay another night in this houſe. Time will explain every thing. Call my chairmen there. Sir John has it his own way at preſent. (*Enter chairmen.*) You have ſettled this among yourſelves. I ſhall now go to my brother's. Sir John I have no more to ſay at preſent. Hold up. (*goes to the chair.*)

Sir

Sir JOHN.

Let the chair alone. You ſhall not go: you ſhall not quit this houſe, till I conſent. (*goes between her and the chair.*)

Lady RESTLESS.

I ſay hold up.

Sir JOHN.

Let it alone.

Lady RESTLESS.

Very well, Sir: I muſt be your priſoner, muſt I?

Sir JOHN.

It is mine to command here. No looſe eſcapes this night; no aſſignations; no intrigues to diſgrace me.

Lady RESTLESS.

Such inhuman treatment! I am glad there are witneſſes of your behaviour. (*walks away*)

BLANDFORD.

I am ſorry to ſee all this confuſion; but ſince my daughter is not here——

Lady RESTLESS.

He knows where ſhe is, and ſo you will find.

Sir JOHN. (*coming forward.*)

Your daughter is innocent, Sir, I give you my honour. Where ſhould ſhe be in this houſe? Lady Reſtleſs has occaſioned all this miſchief. She formed a ſtory to palliate her own miſconduct. To her various artifices you are a ſtranger; but in a few days you may depend——

Lady RESTLESS. (*aſide, as ſhe goes towards the chair.*) He ſhall find that I am not to be detained here. (*makes ſigns to the chairmen to hold up.*)

Sir JOHN.

I ſay, gentlemen, you may depend that I have full proof, and in a little time every thing will—(*the chair is opened, and Belinda comes out.*)

Lady RESTLESS.

Who has proof now? There, there! in his houſe all the time!

BLANDFORD.

What do I ſee?

BEVERLEY.

Belinda here!

Sir WILLIAM.

So, ſo! there is ſomething in it, I ſee.

Sir JOHN.

Diſtraction! this is unlucky.

Lady RESTLESS.

What ſay you now, Mr. Beverley?—Now Mr. Blandford! there; ocular demonſtration for you!

Sir WILLIAM.

George, take Clariſſa as ſoon as you will. Mr. Blandford, you will excuſe me, if I now decline any further treaty with you.

BLANDFORD.

This abrupt behaviour, Sir William——

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

I am satisfied Sir. I am resolved. Clarissa, you have my approbation: my son is at your service. Here, George, take her, and be happy.

BELLMONT. *(taking her hand)*

To you from this moment I dedicate all my future days.

BLANDFORD.

Very well: take your own way. I can still protect my daughter.

BEVERLEY.

And she deserves your protection: my dear Belinda explain all this: I know it is in your power.

BELINDA.

This generous behaviour, Sir, recalls me to new life. You, I am now convinced, have been accused by my Lady Restless without foundation. Whatever turn her Ladyship's unhappy self-tormenting fancy may give to my conduct, it may provoke a smile, but will excite no other passion.

Lady RESTLESS.

Mighty fine! what brought you to this house?

BELINDA.

To be a witness of your folly, Madam, and Sir John's into the bargain.

BELLMONT.

That I can vouch: Sir John can fill his mind with vain chimæras, with as apt a disposition as his Lady. Beverley has been represented in the falsest colours—

Lady RESTLESS.

That I admit: Sir John invented the ſtory.

BEVERLEY.

And Belinda, Madam, has been cruelly ſlandered by you.

Sir JOHN.

She has ſo: that I admit.

BELINDA.

And my deſire to ſee all this cleared up, brought me to this houſe, Madam. Now you ſee what has made this confuſion.

Lady RESTLESS.

Oh! I expected theſe airs. You may diſcuſs the point where you pleaſe: I will hear no more upon the ſubject. [*Exit.*

BLANDFORD.

Madam, the ſubject muſt be ſettled. (*follows her.*)

Sir JOHN.

You have a right to inſiſt upon it: The whole ſhall be explained this moment. Sir William, you are a diſpaſſionate man. Give us your aſſiſtance. [*Exit.*

Sir WILLIAM.

With all my heart. George, you are no longer concerned in this buſineſs, and I am glad of it.

[*Exit, with young Bellmont.*

CLA-

CLARISSA. (*to Beverley.*)

Now Brother, now is your time: your difficulties are all removed. Sir John ſuſpected you without reaſon: my Lady Reſtleſs did the ſame to Belinda: you are both in love, and now may do each other juſtice. I can ſatisfy my Lady Reſtleſs and your father.

[*Exit.*

BEVERLEY. (*aſide*)

I ſee, I ſee my raſhneſs.

BELINDA. (*aſide*)

I have been terribly deceived.

BEVERLEY.

If ſhe would but forgive my folly.

BELINDA.

Why does not he open his mind to me? I can' ſpeak firſt.

BEVERLEY.

What apology can I make her?—Belinda!

BELINDA.

Charming! he begins. (*aſide, and ſmiling*)

BEVERLEY. (*approaching*)

Belinda!—no anſwer?—Belinda!

BELINDA.

Mr. Beverley!—(*ſmiles aſide*)

BEVERLEY.

Don't you think you have been very cruel to me, Belinda? (*advancing towards her*)

BELINDA.

Don't you think you have been barbarous to me? (*without looking at him*)

BEVERLEY.

I have: I grant it. Can you find in your heart to forgive me?

BELINDA. (*without looking at him*)

You have kept me on the rack this whole day, and can you wonder that I feel myſelf unhappy?

BEVERLEY.

I am to blame: I acknowledge it. If you knew how my own heart reproaches me, you would ſpare yourſelf the trouble. With tears in my eyes I now ſpeak to you: I acknowledge all my errors.

BELINDA. (*looking at him*)

Thoſe are not tears, Mr. Beverley. (*ſmiling*)

BEVERLEY.

They are; you ſee that they are.

BELINDA.

Ah! you men can command tears.

BEVERLEY.

My life! my angel! *(kiſſes her hand)* Do you forgive me?

BELINDA.

No; I hate you. (*looking pleaſed at him*)

BEVERLEY.

Now, I don't believe that. (*kiſſes her cheek*) Do you hate me, Belinda?

BELINDA.

How could you let an extravagance of temper get the better of you? You know the ſincerity of my affection. Oh, Mr. Beverley! was it not ungenerous?

BEVERLEY.

It was; I own it; on my knees I own it.

BELINDA. (*laughing*)

Oh! proud man! have I humbled you?—Since you ſubmit to my will and pleaſure, I think I can forgive you.—Beg my picture back this moment.

(*ſhews it to him*)

BEVERLEY. (*taking the picture*)

I ſhall adore it ever, and heal this breach with uninterrupted love.

Enter

Enter Sir JOHN, Lady RESTLESS, Sir WILLIAM, BLANDORD, BELLMONT *and* CLARISSA.

Sir JOHN. (*laughing*)

Why yes; it is very clear. I can now laugh at my own folly, and my wife's too.

Lady RESTLESS.

There has been ſomething of a miſtake, I believe.

BEVERLEY.

You ſee, Sir John, what your ſuſpicions are come to. I never was within your doors before this day; nor ſhould I, perhaps, have had the honour of ſpeaking to your Lady, had it not been for the miſunderſtanding your mutual jealouſies occaſioned between Belinda and me.

BLANDFORD.

And your Ladyſhip has been ingenious enough to work out of thoſe whimſical circumſtances a charge againſt my daughter. Ha! ha!

Sir JOHN.

It is ever her way, Sir. I told you, my dear, that you would make yourſelf very ridiculous.

Lady RESTLESS.

I fancy, Sir, you have not been behind hand with me. Ha! ha! ha!

Sir WILLIAM.

And now, Mr. Blandford, I think we may as well let the match go on as we at firſt intended.

BLAND-

BLANDFORD.

No, no more of that: you have diſpoſed of your ſon. Belinda, I no longer oppoſe your inclinations: take Mr. Beverley as ſoon as you will.

Sir JOHN.

Now let us ſee: if ſhe agrees to marry him, why then, ſhe knows he is innocent, and I ſhall be ſatisfied. (*aſide*)

BELINDA.

If you inſiſt upon it, Sir.

BLANDFORD.

I do inſiſt.

Lady RESTLESS.

If Beverley accepts of her, all my ſuſpicions are at an end. (*aſide*)

BEVERLEY.

Thus let me take the bright reward of all my wiſhes. (*takes her hand*)

BELINDA.

Since it is over, you have uſed your authority, Sir, to make me happy indeed. We have both ſeen our error, and frankly confeſs that we have been in the wrong too.

Sir WILLIAM.

Why, we have been all in the wrong, I think.

Sir JOHN.

It has been a day of miſtakes, but of fortunate ones, conducing at laſt to the advantage of all parties. My Lady Reſtleſs will now be taught——

Lady

Lady RESTLESS.

Sir John, I hope you will be taught——

BLANDFORD.

Never mention what is paſt. The wrangling of married people about unlucky queſtions that break out between them, is like the laſhing of a top; it only ſerves to keep it up the longer.

Sir JOHN.

Very true: and ſince we have been ALL IN THE WRONG TO-DAY, we will, for the future, endeavour to be ALL IN THE RIGHT.

BEVERLEY.

A fair propoſal, Sir John: we will make it our buſineſs, both you, who are married, and we, who are now entering into that ſtate, by mutual confidence to enſure mutual happineſs.

The God of Love, thinks we profane his fire,
When trifles light as air miſtruſt inſpire.
But where eſteem and gen'rous paſſions ſpring,
There reigns ſecure, and waves his purple wing;
Gives home-felt peace; prevents the nuptial ſtrife;
Endears the bliſs, and bids it laſt for life.

FINIS.

EPI-

EPILOGUE.

Written by Mr. GARRICK.

Spoken by Mrs. YATES.

BLESS me, this ſummer work is ſo fatiguing!
And then our plays ſo buſtling, ſo intriguing!
Such miſſing, ſighing, ſcolding, all together!
Theſe love affairs ſuit beſt with colder weather.
At this warm time theſe writers ſhou'd not treat you,
With ſo much love, and paſſion,—for they'll beat you:
Poets, like Weavers, ſhould with taſte and reaſon,
Adapt their various goods to ev'ry ſeaſon.
For the hot months, the fanciful, and ſlight;
For mind, and body, ſomething cool and light:
Authors themſelves indeed neglect this rule;
Dreſs warm in ſummer, and at Chriſtmas cool.
I told our Bard within, theſe five act plays,
Are rich brocades, unfit for ſultry days.
Were you a cook, ſaid I, wou'd you prepare,
Large hams, and roaſted ſirloins for your fare?
Their very ſmoke would pall a city glutton;
A Tragedy *would make you all unbutton!*
Both appetites now aſk for daintier picking,
Farce, pantomime, cold lamb, or white leg'd chicken.
At Ranelagh fine rolls and butter ſee:
Signor Tenducci, *and the beſt green tea!*
Italian ſinging is as light as feather;
Beard *is too loud, too powerful for this weather!*
Vauxhall more ſolidly regales your palates;
Champaigne, cantata's, cold boil'd beef, and ballads.
What ſhall we do your different taſtes to hit?
You *reliſh ſatire;* [to the pit] you *ragouts of wit;*
[boxes]
Your

Your *taſte is humour, and high ſeaſon'd joke*; [1ſt gall.]
You *call for hornpipes, and for Hearts of Oak!* [2d gall.]
O could I wiſh and have!—A conjuring man
Once told my fortune,—and he charm'd this fan!
Said with a flirt I might my will enjoy:
Think you there's magic in this little toy?
I'll try its pow'r; and, if I gain my wiſh,
I'll give you, Sirs, a downright Engliſh diſh.
Come then; a ſong [muſic is heard] *indeed! I ſee 'twill do.*
Take heed gallants, I'll play the deuce with you.
Whene'er I pleaſe, I'll charm you to my ſight;
And tear a FAN WITH FLIRTING *ev'ry night.*

Enter two BALLAD SINGERS, who ſing the following Song.

S O N G.

YE Critics above, and ye Critics below,
Ye finer ſpun Critics, who keep the mid row,
O tarry a moment, I'll ſing you a ſong,
Shall prove that, like us, you are all in the wrong.

Ye Poets, who mount on the fam'd winged ſteed,
Of prancing, and wincing, and kicking take heed:
For when by thoſe hornets, the Critics, you're ſtung,
You're thrown in the dirt, and are all in the wrong.

Ye Actors, who act what theſe writers have writ,
Pray ſtick to your Poet, and ſpare your own wit;
For when with your own you unbridle your tongue,
I'll hold ten to one you are all in the wrong.

Ye Knaves, who make news for the fooliſh to read,
Who print daily ſlanders the hungry to feed:
For a while you miſlead 'em, the news hunting throng,
Till the pillory proves, you are all in the wrong.

Ye

Ye grave Politicians, ſo deep and ſo wiſe,
With your hums, and your ſhrugs, and your uplifted eyes;
The road that you travel, is tedious and long,
But I pray you jog on; you are all in the wrong.

Ye happy fond huſbands, and fond happy wives,
Let never ſuſpicion embitter your lives;
Let your prudence be ſtout, and your faith be as ſtrong;
Who watch, or who catch, they are all in the wrong.

Ye unmarried folks be not bought, or be ſold,
Let age avoid youth, and the young ones the old;
For they'll ſoon get together, the young with the young,
And then my wiſe old ones, you're all in the wrong.

Ye ſoldiers and ſailors, who bravely have fought,
Who honour and glory, and laurels have bought;
Let your foes but appear, you'll be at 'em ding dong,
And if they come near you, they're all in the wrong.

Ye judges of taſte to our labours be kind,
Our errors are many, pray wink, or be blind;
Still find your way hither to glad us each night,
And our note we will change to you're all in the right.

THE

DESERT ISLAND,

A

DRAMATIC POEM,

IN

THREE ACTS.

Performed at the

THEATRE ROYAL

IN

DRURY-LANE.

Te, dulcis conjux, te ſolo in littore ſecum,
Te veniente die, te decedente canebat.

PROLOGUE.

Written and ſpoken by Mr. GARRICK,

In the Character of a DRUNKEN POET.

ALL, all ſhall out; all that I know and feel;
I will by Heav'n to higher powers appeal!
Behold a Bard! no Author of to-night!
No, no, they can't ſay that, with all their ſpite:
Ay, you may frown (looking behind the ſcenes) *I'm at*
you, great and ſmall;
Your Poet, Players, Managers and all!
Theſe fools within here, ſwear that I'm in liquor:
My paſſion warms me, makes my utt'rance thicker:
I totter too; but that's the gout and pain:
French wines, and living high, have been my bane.
From all temptations now, I wiſely ſteer me;
Nor will I ſuffer one fine woman near me.
And this I ſacrifice, to give you pleaſure:
For you I've coin'd my brains, and here's the treaſure.
(pulls out a Manuſcript)
A treaſure this, of profit and delight!
And all thrown by for this damn'd ſtuff to-night!
This is a play would water ev'ry eye!
If I but look upon't, it makes me cry.
This play would tears from blood-ſtain'd ſoldiers draw,
And melt the bowels of hard-hearted law!
Would fore and aft the ſtorm-proof ſailor rake;
Keep turtle-eating Aldermen awake!

Would the cold blood of ancient maidens thrill,
And make ev'n pretty younger tongues lie ſtill.
This play not ev'n Managers would refuſe,
Had Heav'n but giv'n 'em any brains to chuſe!
(puts up his Manuſcript)
Your Bard to-night, bred in the antient ſchool,
Deſigns and meaſures all by critic rule;
'Mongſt friends it goes no farther—He's a fool.
So very claſſic, and ſo very dull,
His Deſert Iſland *is his own dear ſkull.*
No ſoul to make the Playhouſe ring, and rattle,
No trumpets, thunder, ranting, ſtorms, or battle!
But all your fine poetic prittle prattle.
The plot is this—A lady's loſt away;
" Long before the beginning of the play;"
And they are taken by a fiſherman,
The lady and the child—'tis Bays's plan:
So on he blunders—He's an Iriſhman.
'Tis all alike; his comic ſtuff I mean:
I hate all humour; it gives me the ſpleen;
So damn 'em both, with all my heart, unſight, unſeen. *
But ſhould you ruin him, ſtill I'm undone:
I've try'd all ways to bring my Phœnix on.
(ſhewing his play again)
Flatter I can with any of their tribe;
Can cut and ſlaſh; indeed I cannot bribe.
What muſt I do then?—Beg you to ſubſcribe.

* The Way to Keep Him, in three acts, was preſented as the after piece on the ſame night.

Be

Be kind ye boxes, galleries, and pit:
'Tis but a crown a-piece for all this wit:
All ſterling wit! to puff myſelf I hate:
You'll ne'er ſupply your wants at ſuch a rate!
'Tis worth your money, I would ſcorn to wrong ye:
You ſmile conſent; I'll ſend my hat among ye.

(going, he returns)

So much beyond all praiſe your bounties ſwell!
Not my own tongue, my gra-ti-tude can tell.
" A little flattery ſometimes does well."

(ſtaggers off)

Dramatis Perſonæ.

M E N.

FERDINAND, Huſband to CONSTANTIA,	Mr. HOLLAND.
HENRICO, Friend to FERDINAND,	Mr. FLEETWOOD.

W O M E N.

CONSTANTIA,	Mrs. PRITCHARD.
SYLVIA, her Daughter,	Miſs PRITCHARD.

SCENE, *A Deſert Iſland.*

THE DESERT ISLAND.

ACT the FIRST.

The ſcene repreſents a vale in the Deſert Iſland, ſurrounded by rocks, caverns, grottos, flowering ſhrubs, exotic trees, and plants growing wild. On one ſide is a cavern in a rock, over the entrance of which appears, in large characters, an unfiniſhed inſcription. CONSTANTIA *is diſcovered at work at the inſcription, in a romantic habit of ſkins, leaves, and flowers: in her hand ſhe holds a broken ſword, and ſtands in act to finiſh the imperfect inſcription.*

After a ſhort pauſe, ſhe begins.

REST, reſt my arm; ye weary ſinews, reſt:
Awhile forget your office. On this rock
Here ſit thee down, and think thyſelf to ſtone.
(ſits down)
Would Heav'n I could! *(riſes)* Ye ſhrubs, ye name-
leſs plants,
That, wildly-gadding, 'midſt the rifted rocks
Wreathe your fantaſtic ſhoots; ye darkſome trees,
That ſpread yon verdant arch above my head,
Shadowing this ſolemn ſcene; ye moſs-grown caves,
Romantic grottos,—all ye objects drear!
Tell me, in pity tell me, have ye ſeen,
Thro' the long ſeries of revolving time,
In which you have inclos'd this lonely manſion,
Say, have ye ſeen another wretch like me?
No, never! You, in tendereſt ſympathy,

Have join'd my plaints: you, at the midnight hour,
When with uprooted hair I've ſtrew'd the earth,
And call'd my huſband gone; have call'd in vain
Perfidious Ferdinand! you, at that hour,
Have waken'd echo in each vocal cell,
Till ev'ry grove, and ev'ry green hill round,
Mourn'd to my griefs reſponſive. Well you know
The ſtory of my woes: ev'n yonder marble
Relenting feels the touch; receives each trace
That forms the melancholy tale.—Tho' rude,
And inexpert my hand; tho' all uncouth
The inſtrument, yet there behold my work
Well nigh complete. Let me about it ſtraight.
(*ſhe advances toward the rock*)
Ye deep engraven letters, there remain;
And if in future time reſiſtleſs fate
Shall throw ſome Briton on this diſmal ſhore;
Then ſpeak aloud; to his aſtoniſh'd ſenſe
Relate my ſad, my memorable caſe:
Alarm his ſoul, call out——

STOP TRAVELLER.
HERE
CONSTANTIA,
WITH HER LITTLE INFANT,
SYLVIA,
WAS DESERTED BY HER HUSBAND,
THE PERFIDIOUS
FERDINAND;
WHO PRETENDING TO LAND HER
FOR REFRESHMENT
FROM THE DANGERS OF A STORMY SEA,
BARBAROUSLY LEFT HER
ON THIS UNHOSPITABLE ISLAND,
WHERE SHE ENDED HER DEPLORABLE LIFE.

FRIEND!

FRIEND!
WHOE'ER THOU ART,
PITY MY WRONGS,
BUT AGAINST MY HUSBAND,
(FOR LOVE LIKE MINE CANNOT FORGET
WHERE ONCE WITH DELIGHT IT FIXED)
I CHARGE YOU NEVER MEDITATE R———
Revenge!—the word Revenge is wanting ſtill.
Ye holy pow'rs! if with one pitying look
You'll deign to view me, grant my earneſt pray'r!
Let me but finiſh this my ſad inſcription,
Then let this buſy, this afflicted heart
Be ſtill at once, and beat my breaſt no more.
(ſhe goes on with her work)

Enter SYLVIA.

SYLVIA.

My deareſt mother! Oh! quite out of breath.

CONSTANTIA.

What is the matter, child?

SYLVIA.

My flutt'ring heart
Beats wild with joy. Oh! ſuch an incident!

CONSTANTIA.

What incident, my ſweet?

SYLVIA.

My little fawn,
My dear, my loveliеſt fawn, for many days

Whoſe

Whoſe loſs I've mourn'd; for whoſe dear ſake I've left
No corner of the Iſle unſearch'd; this moment,
O'er the dew-ſpangled lawn, with printleſs feet,
Came bounding to me; playful friſk'd about
With inexpreſſive airs of glad ſurprize,
With eager ſigns of tranſport: big round tears
Stood trembling in his eye, and ſeem'd to ſpeak
His fond regret ſtill mingling with his joy.

CONSTANTIA.

And is it that, my love, delights thee ſo?

SYLVIA.

And can you wonder, Ma'am? Yes, that delights me,
Tranſports me, charms me: he's my darling care,
My dear companion, my ſweet little friend,
That loves me, gambols round me, watches ſtill
With anxious tenderneſs my ev'ry motion,
Pants on my boſom, leaps into my arms,
And wanders o'er me with a thouſand kiſſes.
Before this time, he never once ſtray'd from me.
I thought I loſt him; but he's found again!
And can you wonder I'm tranſported thus?

CONSTANTIA.

Oh! happy ſtate of innocence! how ſweet
Thy joys, ſimplicity, e'er yet the mind
With artificial paſſions learns to glow;
Ere taſte has ta'en our ſenſes to her ſchool,
Has given each well-bred appetite her laws,
Taught us to feel imaginary bliſs,
Or elſe expire in elegance of pain.

SYLVIA.

SYLVIA.

Nay, now, again, you're growing grave: 'tis you
Give laws to appetite; forbid each ſenſe
To miniſter delight. Your eyes are dimm'd
With conſtant tears; the roſes on your cheek
Fade like yon violets, when exceſſive dews
Have bent their drooping, melancholy heads.
Soon they repair their graces; ſoon recal
Their aromatic lives, and ſmiling yield
To ſighing Zephyr all their balmy ſweets.
To grief you're ſtill a prey: ſtill wan deſpair
Sits with'ring at your heart, and ev'ry feature
Has your directions to be fixed in woe.
Nay, pr'ythee dry thoſe tears: you make me ſad.
Will you, at length, forget your cares?

CONSTANTIA.

Forget!
Oh! ſweet oblivion, thy all healing balm
To wretches you refuſe! Can I forget
Perfidious Ferdinand? His tyrant form
Is ever preſent: the deluding looks,
Endearing accents, and the ſoft regards
With which he led me to yon moſs-clad cave,
There to repoſe awhile. Oh! cruel man!
And you, ye conſcious wilds, I call you falſe!
Accomplices in guilt! The Zephyrs bland
That pant upon each leaf; the melody
That warbles thro' your groves; the falling foun-
tains,
That at each deep'ning cadence lull the mind,
Were all ſuborn'd againſt me; all conſpir'd
To wrap me in the ſilken folds of ſleep.
Sudden I wake: where, where is Ferdinand?
I rave, I ſhriek; no Ferdinand replies;

Frantic

Frantic I rove thro' all your winding glades :
I ſeek the ſhore, no Ferdinand appears!
I climb yon craggy ſteeps; I ſee the ſhip
Unfurling all her ſails! I call aloud,
I ſtamp, cry out; deaf as the roaring ſea
He catches ev'ry gale that blows from Heav'n,
And cleaves his liquid way.

SYLVIA.

Why will you thus
Recall your paſt afflictions?

CONSTANTIA.

Ah! what then,
Thou wretched Conſtance, what were then thy feelings?
I rend my treſſes, beat my breaſt in vain,
In vain ſtretch out theſe ineffectual arms;
Pierce with my frantic cries the wounded air;
Daſh my bare boſom on the flinty rock,
Then riſe again, and ſtrain my aching ſight,
To ſee the ſhip ſtill leſs'ning to my view,
And take the laſt, laſt glimpſe, as far, far off,
In the horizon's verge ſhe leſſens ſtill,
Grows a dim ſpeck, and mixes with the clouds
Juſt vaniſhing, juſt loſt,—ah! ſeen no more.

SYLVIA.

I pr'ythee don't talk ſo: my heart dies in me.
Why won't you ſtrive a little to forget
This melancholy theme? The twilight grey
Of morn but faintly ſtreaks the eaſt; the ſtars
Still glimmer thro' the whit'ning air; the groves
Are mute; yon all-devouring deep lies huſh'd;
The tuneful birds, and the whole brute creation
Still ſink in ſoft oblivious ſlumber wrapp'd,

For-

Forgetful of their cares. All, all but you
Know ſome repoſe: you paſs the dreary night
In tears and ceaſeleſs grief; then riſing wild
Anticipate the dawn, and here reſume
Your doleful taſk, or elſe aſcend the height
Of yonder promontory; there forlorn
You ſit, and hear the brawling waves beneath
Laſh the reſounding ſhore; your brimful eye
Still fix'd on that ſad quarter of the heav'ns
Where my hard father diſappear'd.

CONSTANTIA.

Yes, there
My melancholy loves to dwell; there loves
To ſit, and pine over its hoard of grief;
To roll theſe eyes o'er all the ſullen main,
In hopes ſome ſail may this way ſhape its courſe
With the glad tidings of the human race!
Could I behold that dear, that wiſh'd for ſight,
Could I but ſee ſome veſtiges of man,
Some mark of ſocial life, ev'n tho' the ſhip
Should ſhun this iſle, and court propitious gales
Beneath ſome happier clime; yet ſtill the view
Would chear my ſoul, and my heart bound with joy
At that faint proſpect of my fellow creatures.
But not for me, ſuch tranſport; not for me!
Dear native land, I now no more muſt ſee thee,
Condemn'd in ever-during ſolitude to mourn,
From thy ſweet joys, ſociety, debarr'd!

SYLVIA.

But to your happineſs what's wanting here?
Full many a time I've heard you praiſe the arts,
The poliſh'd manners, and gay ſcenes of bliſs
Which Europe yields: yet ever and anon
I from your own diſcourſe can gather too

That

That happineſs is all unknown to Europe:
That envy there can dwell, and diſcontent;
The ſmile, that wakens at another's woe;
The heart, that ſickens at another's praiſe;
The tongue, that carries the malignant tale;
The little ſpirit, that ſubverts a friend:
Fraud, perfidy, ingratitude, and murder.
Now ſure with reaſon I prefer theſe ſcenes
Of innocence, tranquility, and joy!

CONSTANTIA.

Alas! my child, 'tis eaſy to forego
Untaſted ſweets, pleaſures you never knew.

SYLVIA.

Are we not here what you yourſelf have told me
In Europe ſovereigns are? Here we have fix'd
Our little ſylvan reign. The guileleſs race
Of animals, that roam the lawns and woods,
Are tractable and willing ſubjects; pay
Paſſive obedience to us; and yon ſea
Becomes our tributary; hither rolls
In each hoarſe-murm'ring tide his various ſtores
Of daintieſt ſhell-fiſh. The unbidden earth,
Of human toil all ignorant, pours forth
Whatever to the eye, or taſte, can prove
Rare, exquiſite, and good. At once the ſpring
Calls forth its green delights, and ſummer's bluſh
Glows on each purple branch. The ſeaſons here

On the ſame tree, with glad ſurprize,
Behold each other's gifts ariſe:
Spontaneous fruits around us grow;
For ever here the Zephyrs blow:
Shrubs ever flow'ring,
Shades embow'ring;

Heav'nly

Heav'nly ſpots,
Cooling grots,
Verdant mountains,
Falling fountains;
Pure limpid rills,
Adown the hills,
That wind their way,
And o'er the meadows play,
Enamour'd of th' enchanted ground,

CONSTANTIA.

What is this waſte of beauty, all theſe charms
Of cold, inanimate, unconſcious nature,
Without the ſocial ſenſe?

SYLVIA.

Thoſe beauteous tracts
Which you ſo much regret, are full of men;
And men, you know, are animals of prey:
I'm ſure that you yourſelf have told me ſo
A thouſand times.

CONSTANTIA.

And if I have, my child,
I told a diſmal truth. Oh! they are falſe,
Inexorable, cruel, fell deceivers:
Their unrelenting hearts no harbour know
For honour, truth, humanity, or love.

SYLVIA.

Well then, in this lone iſle, this dear retreat
From them at leaſt we're free.

CONSTANTIA.

Poor innocent!
I can't but grieve for her. *(burſts into tears)*

SYLVIA.

SYLVIA.

Why fall afreſh
Thoſe drops of ſorrow? Pray you, now give o'er.

CONSTANTIA.

My heart will break. I do not grieve, my child.
I can't conceal my tears: they will have way.

SYLVIA.

Nay, if you love me, ſure you will not thus
Make my heart ake within me!

CONSTANTIA.

No, my ſweet;
I will not weep. All will be well, my love.
Oh! miſery! I can't, I can't contain.
The black ingratitude! *(weeps)*

SYLVIA.

Say, is there aught
Sylvia can do, that may afford you comfort?
If there is, tell me. Shall I fetch my fawn?
Dry up your tears, and he is your's this moment.

CONSTANTIA.

No, Sylvia, no!

SYLVIA.

He muſt, he ſhall be your's.
Refuſe me not. I'll run and bring him to you.
[*Exit.*

CON-

CONSTANTIA. *(alone)*

Alas! I fear my brain will turn—the ſun
Full ſixteen times has made his annual courſe,
Since here I've dragg'd a miſerable being,
The victim of deſpair; which long e'er now,
To phrenzy kindling, muſt have forc'd me daſh
My brain in madneſs on yon flinty rocks,
And end my pangs at once; if the keen inſtinct
Of ſtrong maternal love had not reſtrain'd
My wild diſorder'd ſoul, and bade me live
To watch her tender infancy; to rear
Her blooming years; with fond delighted care
To tend each bloſſom of her growing mind,
And ſee light gradual dawning on her ſoul.
And yet to ſee her thus, to ſee her here,
Cut off from ev'ry ſocial bliſs; condemn'd,
Like ſome fair flow'r that in a deſart blows,
To breath its ſweets into the paſſing wind,
And waſte its bloom all unperceiv'd away!
It is enough to break a mother's heart.
Let me not think on't; let me ſhun that thought.
(ſits down, and ſings)

I.

What tho' his guilt my heart hath torn,
Yet lovely is his mien,
His eyes mild-op'ning as the morn,
Round him each grace is ſeen.
But oh! ye nymphs, your loves ne'er let him win,
For oh! deceit and falſehood dwell within.

II.

From his red lips his accents ſtole,
Soft as kind vernal ſhows;
Melting they came, and in the ſoul
Deſire and joy aroſe.

But oh! ye nymphs, ne'er liſten to his art,
For oh! baſe falſehood rankles in his heart.

III.

He left me in this lonely ſtate!
He fled, and left me here,
Another Ariadne's fate,
To mourn the live-long year.
He fled; but oh! what pains the heart muſt prove,
When we reveal the crimes of him we love!

Re-enter SYLVIA.

SYLVIA.

I cannot bring him now: in yonder ſtream,
That through its pebbled channel glides along,
Soft murm'ring to the ſea, he ſtands to cool
His beauteous form in the pure limpid rill.

CONSTANTIA.

To thee he cauſes joy; but joy to me
There's nothing now can bring. Left by my huſband!
By the falſe, barb'rous man!

SYLVIA.

And yet this man,
This falſe, deceitful man, you ſtill regret.
I vow, I can't but think, 'midſt all your grief,
All your reproaches, your complaints againſt him,
That ſtill this falſe, this cruel, fell deceiver,
Has found,—I know not why—within your breaſt
Some tender advocate, to plead his cauſe.

CON-

CONSTANTIA.

No, Sylvia, no; my love is turn'd to hate.

SYLVIA.

Then dry your ſorrows, and this day begin
A happier train of years. And lo! the ſun
Emerges from the ſea: he lifts his orb
Above the purpled main, and ſtreams abroad
His golden fluid o'er the world. The birds
Exulting wake their notes; all things rejoice,
And hills, and groves, and rocks, and vallies ſmile.
Let me entreat you then forget your cares,
And ſhare the general bliſs.

(The ſun is ſeen to riſe at a diſtance, as it were out of the ſea)

CONSTANTIA.

Once more all hail,
Thou radiant power, who in your bright career,
Or riſing or deſcending, haſt beheld
My never-ceaſing woe! Again thou climb'ſt
In orient glory, and recall'ſt the cares,
And toils of man and beaſt! But oh! in all
Your flaming courſe, your beams will never ligh
Upon a wretch ſo loſt, ſo curſt as I am.

SYLVIA.

And yet, my mother——

CONSTANTIA.

Mine are pangs, my child,
Strokes of adverſity no time can cure,
No lenient arts can ſoften or aſſuage.
But I'll not grieve thee, Sylvia; I'll retire

To ſome ſequeſter'd haunt: there, all forlorn,
I'll ſit, and wear myſelf away in thought. [*Exit.*

SYLVIA. *(alone)*

Alas! how obſtinately bent on grief
Is her whole mind! the votariſt of care!
In vain I try to ſoften her afflictions,
And with each art beguile her from her woe.
I chide, intreat, careſs, yet all in vain.
And what to me ſeems ſtrange, perverſe, and wond'rous,
The more I ſtrive, the more her ſorrows ſwell;
Her tears the faſter fall, fall down her cheek
In ſtreams ſo copious, and ſuch bitter anguiſh,
That I myſelf at length, I know not how,
Catch the ſoft weakneſs, and o'erpow'r'd with grief,
Flow all diſſolving in unbidden tears.
Aſſiſt her Heav'n! her heart will break at laſt.
I tremble at the thought. I'll follow ſtraight,
And ſtill implore, beſeech, try ev'ry way
To reconcile her to herſelf and me.
But ſee, look yonder! what a ſight is there!
What can it mean, that huge, enormous maſs,
That moves upon the boſom of the deep!
A floating mountain!—No: a mountain never
Could change its place. For ſuch a monſtrous bulk
How light it urges on its way! how quick,
How rapid in its courſe! What can it be?
I'll to the ſhore, and from the pointed rock
That juts into the waves, at leiſure view
This wond'rous ſight, and what it is explore.

End of the FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT the SECOND.

SCENE, *Another view of the Iſland, with an opening to the ſea between ſeveral hills and rocks.*

Enter SYLVIA.

SYLVIA.

STILL I behold it; ſtill it glides along
Thro' the tumultuous ſea. And lo! before it
The waves divide! and now they cloſe again,
Leaving a tract of angry foam behind.
It muſt be, ſure, ſome monſter of the deep.
And ſee! upon its huge broad back it bears
Expanded wings, that, ſpreading to the wind,
Lie broad incumbent o'er the ſurge beneath.
Ah! ſave me, ſave me! what new forms appear!
What ſhapes of unknown being riſe before me!
From yon huge monſter's ſide they iſſue forth,
And bolt upon the ſhore!—behold, they ſtop,
And now with eager, diſconcerted pace,
Precipitate ruſh forward on the iſle!
Now 'mongſt the rocks they wind their ſilent way.
Protect me, Heav'n! defend me! ſhield me!—ah!
Hide me, ye woods, within your deep receſs;
Ne'er may theſe monſters penetrate your haunts;
Ne'er trace my footſteps thro' your darkſome ways.
Behind the covert of this woodbine bow'r
Oh! let me reſt conceal'd! *(ſhe retires)*

Enter FERDINAND *and* HENRICO.

HENRICO.

No trace appears,
No veſtige here is ſeen of human kind.
'Tis drear, 'tis waſte, and unfrequented all.
And hark!—what noiſe!—from yonder toiling deep
How dreadful ſounds the pealing roar!—My friend,
My valued Ferdinand, 'twere beſt retire.
This cannot be the place.

FERDINAND.

Oh! my Henrico,
This is the fatal ſhore. The well-known ſcene;
Yon bay, yon rocks, yon mountains, from whoſe brow
Th' imbow'ring foreſt overhangs the deep;
Each well-remember'd object ſtrikes my view,
Anſwers the image in my mind preſerv'd,
Engraven there by love's recording hand,
And never, but with life, to fade from thence.

HENRICO.

And yet thy love-enfeebled ſoul may form
Imaginary tokens of reſemblance.
The ſoil unbeaten ſeems by mortal ſtep.

FERDINAND.

My heart in ev'ry pulſe confirms it to me.
This is the place, the dreary ſpot, where fate
Began to weave the tiſſue of my woes.
Oh! I was curſt, abhorr'd of Heav'n, or elſe
I ne'er had truſted the contentious waves,
But kept my ſtore of happineſs at home.

HEN-

HENRICO.

Repine not for an action that aroſe
From filial piety. A father's mandate
Requir'd obedience from you.

FERDINAND.

To his ſummons
I paid a glad attention. Yet, good Heav'n!
Why in that early period of my bliſs
Should then his orders come, to daſh my joys?
Oh! I was bleſt with all that rareſt beauty,
With all that ev'ry Venus of the mind,
The tender heart, and the enliven'd wit
Could pour delightful on the raptur'd ſenſe
Of the young bridegroom, whoſe admiring eyes
Still hung enamour'd on her ev'ry charm,
And thence drank long inſpiring draughts of love,
Unfated ſtill, ſtill kindling at the view.

HENRICO.

Indeed, my Ferdinand, thy fate was hard!

FERDINAND.

Each ſoft deſire, each joy refin'd was mine.
The hours ſoft glided by, and as they paſs'd
Scatter'd new bleſſings from their balmy wings;
They ſaw our ever-new delight; they ſaw
A blooming offspring crown our mutual loves;
The mother's features, and her ev'ry grace
In this our daughter exquiſitely trac'd.
But to be torn from that ſupreme of bliſs!
My wife, Conſtantia,—and my beateous babe,
Here to be left on this untravell'd iſle,
To pine in bitterneſs of want! their bed
The cold bare earth, while the inclement winds

From yonder main came howling round their heads
Until at length the friendly hand of Death
In pity threw his ſhrowd upon their woes.

HENRICO.

Too ſure, I fear, they're loſt.

FERDINAND.

Perhaps, my friend,
Perhaps, when gaſping in the pangs of death,
When ev'ry beauty faded from her cheek,
And her eye languiſh'd motionleſs and dim,
Perhaps ev'n then, in that ſad, diſmal hour,
My name ſtill hover'd on her quiv'ring lips,
And nought but death could tear me from her heart.

HENRICO.

Her tend'reſt thoughts no doubt were fix'd on thee.

FERDINAND.

Her tend'reſt thoughts? Oh! no: her utmoſt rage.
Who knows, Henrico, but ſhe deem'd me falſe;
Deem'd me a vile deſerter from her arms?
She did, ſhe muſt: each ſtrong appearance join'd
To mark me guilty. Oh! that thought ſtrikes deep
Its ſcorpion ſtings into my very heart.
Could ſhe but think me ſo refin'd in guilt,
So exquiſite a villain, as to cauſe
A moment's anguiſh in that tender breaſt,
Where all the loves, where all the virtues dwelt;
'Twere miſery, 'twere torture in th' extreme!
And yet ſhe thought me ſuch; by Heav'n ſhe did;
Accus'd me of the worſt, the blackeſt treaſon,
Of treaſon to my love! Stung with th' idea
She roam'd this iſle, and to theſe deſert wilds

Pour'd

Pour'd forth her lamentable tale. Who knows
But on ſome craggy cliff whole nights ſhe ſat
Raving in madneſs to the moon's pale gleam;
Until at length all kindling into phrenzy,
Claſping her infant cloſer to her breaſt,
With deſperation wild from off the rock
Headlong ſhe plung'd into the roaring ſea,
And her laſt accents murmur'd faithleſs Ferdinand!

HENRICO.

Diſtract not thus your ſoul with fancied woes.
She could not think thee faithleſs; thee, whoſe mind,
Whoſe ev'ry virtue were ſo well approv'd.

FERDINAND.

Still will I hope ſhe did not. Oh! ſhe knew
I made that voyage in duty to a father.
Awhile we ſteer'd a happy courſe, until
Beneath the burning line, from whence the ſun
In ſtraight direction pours his ardent blaze
On ev'ry fever'd ſenſe, a ſtorm aroſe,
Sudden and wild; as if a war of nature
Were thund'ring o'er our heads. Full twenty days
It drove us headlong on the daſhing ſurge
Far from our deſtin'd way, until at length
In evil hour we landed on this iſle.

SYLVIA *returns, and peeps from behind a hedge.*

SYLVIA.

Methought I heard a ſound, as if they both
Held mutual converſe. Yonder lo! they ſtand:
They do not follow me. What can they be?

FER-

FERDINAND.

There is the ſpot, juſt where yon aged tree
Imbrowns the plain beneath, on which the villains,
The unrelenting band of pirates, ſeiz'd me.
There I receiv'd my wound, and there I fought
Till my ſword ſhiver'd in my hand. Worn out,
Oppreſs'd by numbers, pow'rleſs, and diſarm'd,
They bore me headlong to the beach; in vain
Piercing the air with horrid cries; in vain
Back tow'rd the cave, where poor Conſtantia ſlept,
With her lov'd infant daughter in her arms,
Straining my ardent eyes; my eyes alone!
For oh! their cruelty had bound my arms,
And tears and looks were all I then could uſe.

SYLVIA.

The voice but indiſtinctly ſtrikes my ear.
Would they would turn this way.

FERDINAND.

Fetter'd, ty'd down,
They dragg'd me to the veſſel. Bore me hence.
In vain our ſhip purſu'd: in vain gave chace.
Form'd with deteſted ſkill, the guilty bark
In which they plung'd me, gliding o'er the main,
Outſtripp'd their tardy courſe. We ſteer'd away
Far to the regions of accurſed bondage.
Far from Conſtantia, far from ev'ry joy
A doating huſband, and delighted father
Feels in mix'd rapture with his wife and child.
Oh! I could pour my plaints—but I'll not wound
Thy ear, my friend, with further lamentation.

HENRICO.

Would Heaven I could remove the cauſe.

FER-

FERDINAND.

Alas!
That cannot be. Thou can'ſt not bid return
The irrevocable flight of time; recall
The moments of our young delight; annul
And render void, what once the hand of fate
Hath from it's ſtores of woe pour'd down upon me.

SYLVIA. *(half concealed)*

Why will they ſtand with looks averted thus?
I long to ſee their countenance and mien.

FERDINAND.

But yet, thou beſt of friends, yet grant me this.
Aſſiſt my ſearch; Oh! let me roam around
This fatal ſhore! the iſle's circumference
Circles a ſcanty-ſpace. We cannot loſe
Each other here. Do thou purſue that path
That leads due eaſt: this way I'll bend my courſe.

HENRICO.

By Heav'n there is no taſk of hardihood,
Of toil, or danger, but I'll try for thee;
For thee, my friend: to thee I owe my life,
And that more precious boon, my liberty:
Thou haſt releas'd me from the galling chain,
From ſlav'ry's bitter preſſure. 'Twas thy ſkill
That form'd the plan of freedom, ſeiz'd the veſſel,
And made your friends the partners of your flight.
For thee I'll roam around: but oh! I fear
Our ſearch will prove in vain.

FERDINAND.

Too ſure it will.
And yet it is the doom of love like mine

To

To dwell for ever on the ſad idea
Of the dear object loſt; to viſit oft
(A lonely pilgrim) ev'ry well known ſcene,
Each haunted glade, where the lov'd object ſtray'd;
To call each circumſtance of paſs'd delight
Back to the ſoul: in fond excurſions ſeek
Her dear lamented form. Then, oh! my friend,
Then let me taſte that ſad, that penſive comfort.
Range thro' theſe wilds; aſcend each craggy ſteep,
Try in each grotto, in each gloomy cave
If haply there remain ſome veſtige of Conſtantia.

[*Exit.*

HENRICO.

On yonder beach we'll meet again. Farewell!

SYLVIA.

Conceal thee, Sylvia. Ah!—it comes this way!
Then let me ſeek the covert of the woods,
Where nods the browneſt horror; there lie ſafe
From the unuſual ſight of theſe ſtrange beings.

[*Exit.*

HENRICO, *ſolus.*

How cruel is my friend's condition! Doom'd
For ever to regret, yet never find
The object of his ſoul. His early love
He laviſh'd all on her: with her it goes
To the dank grave, and leaves him hapleſs here
To die a lingering death. Yet ſtill I'll try,
By ev'ry office friendſhip can perform,
To heal the wound that preys upon his life.

[*Exit.*

Scene

Scene, Another Part of the Iſland.

Enter SYLVIA.

SYLVIA.

What have my eyes beheld? My flutt'ring heart
Beats quick in ſtrange emotions. From yon grove
Of tufted trees, I ſaw this nameleſs being
Walk o'er the ruſſet heath. It's face appear'd
Confeſs'd to view. It cannot be a man.
No lines of cruelty deform'd his viſage.
Were it a man, his untam'd, ſavage ſoul,
Would ſtrongly ſpeak in each diſtorted feature.
This was all pleaſing, amiable, and mild:
A gentle ſorrow, bright'ning into ſmiles,
Such as beſpoke a calm, yet feeling ſpirit,
Sat on it's peaceful brow, and o'er it threw
A gentle gleam of ſweetneſs and of pain.
It cannot be a woman neither; no;
The dreſs accords not with that mode, which oft
My mother hath deſcrib'd. Whate'er it be,
Attraction dwells about it; winning ſmiles;
Aſſuaſive airs of tenderneſs and joy.
I'll ſeek my mother: ſhe perhaps may know
Theſe forms, to me unuſual. By this row
Of darkſome pines, my ſteps, all unperceiv'd,
May gain the place where with aſſiduous hand
She works, and teaches the rude rocks to tell
Her mournful elegy. What mean my feet?
Why ſtand they thus forgetful of their office?
Why heaves th' involuntary ſigh? And why
Thus in quick pulſes beats my heart? My eyes
A miſty dimneſs covers: in my ears
Strange murmurs ſound; my very breath is loſt.
What can it be?—I know thee, Fear!—'tis thou
That cauſeſt this! And yet it can't be fear.

Fear

Fear cannot thrill with pleaſure thro' the veins;
Knows not this dubious joy, theſe grateful trem-
blings.
I cannot gueſs what theſe emotions mean,
Nor what this buſy thing my heart would want!
Let me ſeek ſhelter in my mother's arms. [*Exit.*

Scene changes to the firſt View of the Iſland, where Conſtantia's Inſcription is ſeen.

Enter FERDINAND.

FERDINAND.

No; never more ſhall theſe fond eyes behold her.
Loſt, loſt, my poor Conſtantia loſt! In vain
I ſearch theſe gloomy woods; in vain call out
Her honour'd name to ev'ry hill and dale.
My eyes are falſe, or on the craggy baſe
Of yonder rock ſome inſtrument appears,
The mark of human kind. A broken ſword!
Oh! all ye heav'nly pow'rs!—the very ſame!
This once was mine! Unfaithful to it's truſt,
It fail'd me at my utmoſt need. I ſee
The well known characters; the very words
That form'd it's motto. 'Tis, it is the ſame.
Oh! were Conſtantia found! What do I ſee?
All o'er with hair the flinty rock beſtrew'd!
Theſe were her decent treſſes; theſe in anguiſh
She tore relentleſs from her beauteous head,
Up by the roots ſhe tore, and ſcatter'd wild
To all the paſſing winds. She ſtill may live!
Conſtantia!—ha!—what myſtic characters
Are hewn into the rock?—My name appears!

(*he reads*)

STOP

STOP TRAVELLER.
HERE
CONSTANTIA,
WITH HER LITTLE INFANT,
SYLVIA,
WAS DESERTED BY HER HUSBAND,
THE PERFIDIOUS
FERDINAND;
WHO PRETENDING TO LAND HER
FOR REFRESHMENT
FROM THE DANGERS OF A STORMY SEA,
BARBAROUSLY LEFT HER
ON THIS UNHOSPITABLE ISLAND,
WHERE SHE ENDED HER DEPLORABLE LIFE.

Support me, Heav'n! Ah! no; withhold your aid,
Ye unrelenting Pow'rs, and let me thus,
Each vital ſpark ſubſiding, thus expire.
(*leans againſt the rock*)

Enter HENRICO.

HENRICO.

What hoa! my Ferdinand! this way the ſound
Struck on my liſt'ning ear. What means my friend
Thus growing to the rock, transform'd to ſtone,
A breathing ſtatue, midſt theſe ſhapeleſs piles?

FERDINAND.

Behold! read there!

HEN-

HENRICO.

Letters engrav'd!
[*he reads part to himſelf, and then repeats aloud*

SHE ENDED HER DEPLORABLE LIFE.

Alas! my friend—(*They gaze ſpeechleſs at each other for ſome time, then Ferdinand falls*)
The ſtorm of grief o'erpow'rs his feeble ſpirits.
Now rouze thy ſtrength, my Ferdinand, and bear
This load of ſorrow like a man.

FERDINAND.

I do;
Thou ſee'ſt I do. I do not weep, my friend.
Theſe eyes are dry; their very ſource is dry.
I am her cruel huſband to the laſt.

HENRICO.

Oh! thou wert ever kind and tender to her.

FERDINAND.

Tender and kind!—look there!—there ſtands the black,
The horrid roll of guilt denounc'd againſt me.
Lo! the dread characters! let me peruſe
The whole ſad record; of this bitter woe
Still deeper drink, and gorge me with affliction.
(*he reads*)

FRIEND!
WHOE'ER THOU ART,
PITY MY WRONGS,

BUT

BUT AGAINST MY HUSBAND,
(FOR LOVE LIKE MINE CANNOT FORGET
WHERE ONCE WITH DELIGHT IT FIXED)
I CHARGE YOU NEVER MEDITATE RE———

Revenge, ſhe meant to ſay: the word's begun!
But Death untimely ſtopt her hand. Oh! miſery!
She thought me falſe, and yet could love me ſtill.
The wound now pierces deeper. Had ſhe loath'd me,
Abhorr'd me, curs'd me, 'twere not half the torture
This angel-goodneſs cauſes. And to loſe her!
To loſe a mind like her's, that thus could pour
Such unexampled tenderneſs and love,
Amidſt the keeneſt anguiſh! On the earth
Meaſure thy length, thou wretch accurſt! there lie,
For ever lie, and to theſe woods and wilds
Howl out thy griefs in madneſs and deſpair.

HENRICO.

I feel, I feel thy ſorrows. Oh! my friend,
Cruel event! your tears, alas! are juſt.
Thoſe guſhing ſorrows may aſſauge your grief,
This ſtorm of rage attemp'ring into peace.

FERDINAND.

Who talks of peace? Let phrenzy ſeize my brain.
Come, moon-ſtruck Madneſs, with thy glaring eye,
And clanking chain; come, ſhoot thy kindling fires
Into my utmoſt ſoul; blaſt ev'ry pow'r;
Raze each idea out; tear up at once
The ſeat of memory—no—leave me that;
Still leave me memory, to picture forth
Conſtantia's lovely form, that I may ſit,
With unclad ſides, upon ſome blaſted heath,
And gloat upon her image; ſee her ſtill,

See her whole days with fancy's guſhing eye,
And gaze on that alone.

HENRICO.

Ariſe, my friend,
And quit this fatal ſhore.

FERDINAND.

And quit this ſhore!
But whither turn? Ah! whither ſhall I go?
Where ſhelter me from miſery?—This iſle
Shall be my journey's bound.

HENRICO.

What can'ſt thou mean?

FERDINAND.

Never again to draw the vital air
But where my love expir'd! To feed my ſoul
With theſe ſad objects, this ſepulchral tale,
Ev'n to the height of yet unheard-of anguiſh:
To print my pious kiſſes on the rock;
To bathe the ground, which her dear footſteps preſs'd,
With the inceſſant tears of burning anguiſh;
To make theſe wilds all vocal with her name,
Till this cold lifeleſs tongue ſhall move no more.

HENRICO.

By Heav'n, you muſt not ſtay.

FERDINAND.

Farewell! farewell!
Conſult thy happineſs!—for ever here
By fate I'm doom'd to ſtay. Alas! Conſtantia!

To

To periſh with thy infant here! No friend
To cloſe thy ghaſtly orbs! Thy pale remains
On the bare earth expos'd, without the tribute
Of a fond huſband's tears o'er thy dead corſe;
Without the laſt ſad obſequies! Yet here,
I ſtill will raiſe an empty ſepulchre.
There ſhall no cold, unconſcious marble form,
In mockery of imitated woe,
Bend o'er the fancy'd urn: myſelf will be
The ſad, the penſive, monumental figure,
Diſtilling real anguiſh o'er the tomb;
Till waſting by degrees I moulder down,
And ſink to ſilent duſt.

HENRICO.

What man could do,
Already you've perform'd——

FERDINAND.

Prithee, no more.
I will about it ſtreight. This place affords
Materials for the work. Thither I'll bring
Whate'er can deck the ſcene. Conſtantia, yes:
I will appeaſe thy diſcontented ſhade,
Then follow thee to yonder realms of bliſs.

[*Exit.*

HENRICO.

His vehemence of grief bears down his reaſon.
He muſt not linger here. His ſtay were fatal.
Force will be neceſſary: to our veſſel
I'll haſten back, and call ſome truſty friends
To bear him from this melancholy ſhore.

End of the SECOND ACT.

ACT the THIRD.

The ſame Scene continues.

Enter SYLVIA.

THRO' the thick-woven ſhade of arching bowr's,
Thro' walks, where never ſun-beam pierc'd, at length
I've gain'd this deep-encircled vale. Ah! me!
I feel ſtrange tremors ſtill. She is not here!
Conſtantia!—no reply:—her mournful taſk
Waits for her ling'ring hand.—What noiſe is that?
I heard ſome ſteps advancing. 'Tis my fawn
That ruſtles thro' the foreſt glade: he ſtops
And looks, then runs, and ſtops again, to take
A fearful gaze! he too perhaps has ſeen
Theſe unknown beings. Yonder lo! he ſtands
In mute expreſſive wonder. Heav'n protect me!
Thro' this cloſe path, that gradual winding up
Leads on to plains, to woods, to verdant lawns
Emboſom'd in the rock, I'll journey up.
The day now glows intenſe, but by the rills,
That thro' embow'ring groves come purling down,
I oft can lay me, and enjoy each breeze
That plays amid thoſe craggy ſcenes. A noiſe
From yonder interwoven branches. Ha!
Ye guarding angels, ſave me!—ſee, ſee there!
It comes again!

Enter HENRICO.

HENRICO.

What beauteous form in theſe ſorelone abodes
Attracts my wond'ring eyes?

SYLVIA.

SYLVIA.

Ye heav'nly powr's! [*retiring from him.*

HENRICO.

It ſwims before my ſight. Whate'er thou art,
Virgin, or goddeſs—oh! a goddeſs ſure!
Thou goddeſs of theſe manſions! for thy looks
Beam heav'nly radiance, with propitious ears
Accept my ſupplication.

SYLVIA.

Ha! it ſpeaks;
It ſpeaks! what doſt thou mean?

HENRICO.

Oh! ſay what place,
What clime is this? And what art thou that thus
Adorn'ſt this lone retreat?

SYLVIA.

Will you firſt
Promiſe to come no nearer?

HENRICO.

With devotion
As true as ever pilgrim offer'd up
In holy fervor to his ſaint, I promiſe.

SYLVIA.

How gentle it's demeanor! tell me now
Who and what art thou?

HENRICO.

I am born to miſery;
A man, whom fate——

SYLVIA.

A man!—art thou a man?
Defend me Heav'n! ye guardian powr's protect me.
[*runing away.*

HENRICO.

Nay, fly me not: a ſudden impulſe here
Bids me purſue. Forgive, thou unknown fair,
That with ſoft violence I thus preſume
To force thee meaſure back thy ſteps again.
[*he brings her back.*

SYLVIA.

Force me not thus, inhuman, barb'rous man!
What have I ſaid—Oh! worthy gen'rous man,
Thus on my knees I beg; have mercy on me.
I never did you harm; indeed I did not.

HENRICO.

Ariſe, (*raiſes her*) thou lovely tenant of theſe woods,
And let me thus, thus as befits the man
Whoſe mind runs o'er with rapture and ſurprize,
Whoſe heart throbs wild with mingled doubt and joy,
Thus let me worſhip this celeſtial form,
This heav'nly brightneſs, to my wond'ring eyes
That ſheds ſuch influence, as when an angel
Breaks thro' a flood of glory to the ſight
Of ſome expiring ſaint, and cheers his ſoul
With viſions of diſcloſing heav'n.

SYLVIA.

SYLVIA.

He kneels!
He kneels to me! how mild his e'ery look!
How ſoft each word!—can man be tender thus,
Of gentle mien, compaſſionate and kind?

HENRICO.

In me thou ſee'ſt a wretch, whoſe heart is prone
To melt at each idea beauty prints
On his delighted ſenſe; and ſure ſuch beauty,
Touch'd by the hand of harmony, adorn'd
With inexpreſſive graces, well may claim
My lowlieſt adoration and my love.

SYLVIA.

This language all is new; but ſtill it has
I know not what of charming in't, that gains
Upon the liſt'ning ear. If this be falſhood,
Then falſhood can aſſume a pleaſing look.

HENRICO.

Oh! if thou art as gracious as thou'rt fair,
Say have you ſeen Conſtantia? when and where,
And how did ſhe expire?

SYLVIA.

Conſtantia lives.
Why did'ſt thou ſay expire? My mother lives,
Lives in theſe bleſt abodes.

HENRICO.

Oh! gentle Sylvia,
So I will call thee, daughter of Conſtantia,
Oh! fly and find her out. Mean time I'll ſeek
Th' afflicted Ferdinand.——

SYLVIA.

What doſt thou ſay?
Can he, can Ferdinand be here? That falſe,
Perfidious, barb'rous man, can he be here?

HENRICO.

He is, my fair; nor barbarous nor falſe.
Fortune that made him wretched, could no more,
Anon you'll know the whole; to waſte a moment
In conf'rence now, and longer to ſuſpend
The meeting of this pair, who now in agony
Bemoan their lot, were barbarous indeed.

SYLVIA.

But may I truſt him? Won't he do her harm?

HENRICO.

He won't, my beauteous fair.

SYLVIA.

Is he like you?

HENRICO.

His goodneſs far tranſcends me,

SYLVIA.

Then I think
I'll venture to comply. Let's go together,

HENRICO.

Oh! I could tend thy ſteps for ever; hear
Soft accents warbling from thy vermeil lip;
Watch thy mild-glancing eye; behold how grace,

Whate'er you do, which ever way you bend,
Guides each harmonious movement; but this hour
Is friendſhip's due: then let us inſtant fly
Thro' diff'rent windings; thou to ſeek Conſtantia,
And I to find her huſband: haply ſo
Their meeting will be ſoon. Mean time farewell!
I'll bring him to this very ſpot. Adieu!
For a ſhort interval adieu, my love!

SYLVIA.

Farewell!—another word: pray what's your name?

HENRICO.

Fair excellence, Henrico I am call'd.

SYLVIA.

Pray do not tarry long, Henrico,

HENRICO.

Why
That pleaſing charge, my ſweet?

SYLVIA.

I cannot tell;
But as you're leaving me, each ſtep you move,
My ſpirits ſink; a melancholy gloom
Darkens the ſcene around, and I methinks
Helpleſs in ſolitude am left again,
To wander all alone a dreary way.

HENRICO.

Thou angel ſweetneſs! I'll return anon;
Yes, I will come, and at that lovely ſhrine
Pour out my adoration and my vows.

Yes,

Yes, I will come, to part from thee no more;
A moment now farewell! [*Exit.*

SYLVIA. (*alone*)

Farewell! be ſure you keep your word: he's gone,
And yet is with me ſtill. Abſent I hear
And ſee him in his abſence: ſtill his looks
Beam with mild dignity, and ſtill his voice
Sounds in my ear delightful. What it means,
This new-born ſenſe, this wonderful emotion,
Unfelt till now, and mix'd of pain and joy,
I cannot gueſs. How my heart flutters in me!
I'll not perplex myſelf with vain conjecture.
Whate'er the cauſe, th' effect, I feel, is pleaſing.

[*Conſtantia is heard ſinging within the ſcenes.*

Ah! me! what noiſe is that? My mother's voice
Again ſhe pours her melancholy forth,
As ſweetly plaintive, as when Philomel,
Beneath ſome poplar ſhade, bemoans her young;
And ſitting penſive on the lonely bough,
Her eye with ſorrow dimm'd, ſhe tunes her dirge,
Warbling the night away, while all around
The vocal woodland, and each hill and dale
Ring with her griefs harmonious. Hark! that way
It ſounds. All gracious pow'rs direct me to her.
[*Exit.*

Enter CONSTANTIA.

CONSTANTIA.

From walk to walk, from glade to glade, o'er all
The ſea-girt iſle, o'er ev'ry mountain's top,
I roam from place to place; but oh! no place
Affords relief to me. The ſun now leads
The ſultry hours, and from his burning ray
Each living thing retires; yet I endure

His

His fierceſt rage. The fever in my mind
Heeds not external circumſtance: each day
Sees this ſad heart freſh bleeding as at firſt.
Delay not thus, ye cruel fates, but come
And wrap me in eternal reſt. Till then
Let me purſue my melancholy taſk.
[*works at the inſcription.*

Enter FERDINAND.

FERDINAND.

Away with their ill-tim'd officious care.
I'll none of it. 'Tis cruelty, not friendſhip:
'Tis miſery protracted; 'tis with art,
Inhuman art to lengthen out the life
Of him, who groans in torment. No; they never ſhall
Compel me back to a baſe world again!
I've liv'd enough: my courſe is ended here;
For here Conſtantia lies. Ye heav'nly pow'rs!
What means upon yon conſecrated ground
That viſionary form, with lifted arm
And gleaming ſteel, that ſeems in act to carve
The rugged ſtone?

CONSTANTIA.

What is't I hear! a voice!
A groan! from whence—ha! [*Seeing Ferdinand.*

FERDINAND.

'Tis Conſtantia's form!
Her diſcontented ſhade, that hovers ſtill
About this place.

CON-

CONSTANEIA.

Deluſive, air-drawn ſhape
Of that perfidious—ah! [*She faints away.*

FERDINAND.

Leave me not thus.
Oh! ever gracious, ever gentle, ſay;
'Tis gone; in ſullen ſilence gone!

Enter HENRICO.

HENRICO.

Quick let me find him, to his raptur'd ear
Give the delightful tidings—ha!

FERDINAND.

And thus
I ſink at once and follow my belov'd,
[*Falls into Henrico's arms.*

HENRICO.

He faints, he faints; the chilling dews of death
Diſtil thro' every pore. My Ferdinand,
Awake, ariſe, and hear the joyful ſounds
Of happineſs reſtor'd. His eyes unfold
To ſeek fair day light, and now cloſe again
As if they ſicken'd at the view.

FERDINAND.

Forbear,
And let me die!

HEN-

HENRICO.

Conſtantia lives! ſhe lives
Once more to fold thee in her warm embrace.

FERDINAND.

I ſaw her fleeting form: ſullen and pale
It vaniſh'd from my ſight.

CONSTANTIA.

Alas! no help!
Oh! death, where art thou? [*coming to herſelf.*

HENRICO.

Whence that voice?
Conſtantia there! behold! ſhe too entranc'd
Lies ſtretch'd upon the ground.

FERDINAND.

Where is Conſtantia?
Oh! let me catch the fleeting ſhade. 'Tis ſhe!
It is my wife! it is Conſtantia! ſtill,
Oh! ecſtaſy of bliſs? She ſtill ſurvives!

CONSTANTIA.

'Tis mere illuſion all; the falſe creation
Of ſome deceitful dream.

FERDINAND.

'Tis real all.
Again I fold her thus! the known embrace
Hath thrill'd it's wonted tranſport to my heart.
My life, my ſoul, thy Ferdinand is come.

CON-

CONSTANTIA.

And com'ſt thou then, inhuman as thou art,
Com'ſt thou again to wreak thy malice on me?

FERDINAND.

By heav'n I ne'er was falſe. Daſh not my joys
With thy unkind ſuſpicion of my love,
While thus tranſported far above the lot
Of human bliſs, I preſs my lips to thine,
Inhaling balmy ſweets, and all my ſoul
Runs o'er with bliſs, with wonder and delight.

CONSTANTIA.

Did'ſt thou not meanly leave me here a prey—

FERDINAND.

And can Conſtantia deem me then ſo baſe?
Can ſhe believe me ſuch a vile betrayer?
Can'ſt thou?

CONSTANTIA.

On this unhoſpitable ſhore
Left as I was——

FERDINAND.

Oh! miſery! thou we'rt!
While I was dragg'd by an inſidious band
Of pyrates, ſavage blood-hounds! into bondage.
But witneſs heav'n, witneſs ye midnight hours
That heard my ceaſeleſs groans, how dear thy image
Grew to my very heart!

CON-

CONSTANTIA.

And ha'ſt thou then
Been doom'd to ſlavery?

FERDINAND.

I have.

CONSTANTIA.

And groan'd
This long, long time beneath oppreſſion's rod?

FERDINAND.

E'er ſince theſe eyes have gaz'd delighted on thee,
The bitter draught of miſery was mine.

CONSTANTIA.

And wert thou true indeed?

FERDINAND.

By Heav'n I was.

COMSTANTIA.

And have I then accus'd thee? Have I pour'd
A thouſand ſtrong complaints againſt thee? Called
High judging Heav'n to witneſs to my wrongs?
Told all theſe wilds, theſe rocks, theſe wood crown'd hills
Of injur'd truth and violated love?
Falſely I talk'd, unjuſtly I complain'd
Of injur'd truth and violated love;
My Ferdinand was true! again 'tis giv'n
With his lov'd form to glad theſe eyes, to ruſh
With eager tranſport to his fond embrace,

To

To cling around his neck, and growing to him
Pour the warm tears of rapture and of love.

[*they embrace.*

Enter SYLVIA.

SYLVIA.

I heard my mother's voice. What do I ſee?
In a man's arms! embracing and embrac'd!

FERDINAND.

Is that my Sylvia? Oh! it muſt be ſo.
My child, my child ſurvives! ſurvives to take
A raptur'd father's bleſſing, and o'erpay
His ſuff'rings paſt by this exceſs of joy,
This interview of mingled tears and kiſſes.

SYLVIA.

How gentle his deportment too! I feel
A ſoft attraction bind my ſoul to his.
Are theſe the men, whom you ſo oft deſcrib'd
Inexorable, cruel, fell deceivers?

CONSTANTIA.

I was deceiv'd myſelf, my child; for truth,
Honour, and love, and conſtancy are theirs.
I now have proof of unexampled goodneſs.

SYLVIA.

Indeed I ſtrongly thought you wrong'd 'em much,
When firſt Henrico met my wond'ring eyes.

FERDINAND.

Henrico is my friend, my beſt Conſtantia,
And thou hereafter ſhalt know all his virtues.

SYLVIA

SYLVIA.

And ſhall I know him too?

HENRICO.

Thou ſhalt; and I
Will live thy ſlave, if thou wilt deign to love me.

SYLVIA.

Love you! I know not what you mean by love;
But if with pleaſure to behold thee; if
To hang upon thy words; to mourn thy abſence;
With joy to meet again, and feel my heart
Form new deſires, and wiſh it knows not what,
If that be love, I do already love you.

HENRICO.

Then am I bleſs'd indeed! yes, thou ſhalt be——
My friend will ſmile conſent—yes thou, fair nymph,
Shalt be my bride.

SYLVIA.

Your bride! what's that?

HENRICO.

My wife.

SYLVIA.

No, Sir, not that. I crave your pardon there.
To be left helpleſs on a deſert iſland!

CONSTANTIA.

Thy father did not leave me, Sylvia; no;

He could not prove deliberately falſe.
His heart was unſuſceptible of fraud.
Anon you'll know it all.

HENRICO.

Mean time, my fair,
Baniſh thy fears; and let me with this kiſs
On the white ſoftneſs of this lovely hand,
For ever dedicate my heart.

SYLVIA.

Oh! Heavn's!
What muſt I do, Mama?

CONSTANTIA.

Requite his love
With fair return of thine.

SYLVIA.

Muſt I do ſo?
The taſk appears not undelightful; yes,
To thee I can reſign myſelf. But tell me;
Wilt thou ne'er leave me? Wilt thou ever here
Fix thy abode?

HENRICO.

No; we'll convey thee hence,
To the ſoft influence of a milder clime:
There, like a flow'r tranſplanted, thou ſhalt flouriſh,
And ne'er regret this warmer ſouthern ſky,
But thrive and ripen, to the wond'ring world
Unfolding all thy ſweets to higher bloom.

SYLVIA.

What place is that? And whither will ye bear me?

FER-

FERDINAND.

To thy dear native ſoil, to England, love.

SYLVIA.

To England!

HENRICO.

Yes! the land of beauteous dames:
'Mongſt whom thy matchleſs excellence ſhall ſhine
With undiminiſh'd radiance, and exert
It's gentle pow'r, by innocence endear'd,
By virtue heighten'd, and by modeſt truth
Attemper'd to ſuch ſweetneſs, that each fair,
With unrepining heart, and glad conſent
Shall own thy rival claim; and ev'ry youth,
Touch'd by the graces of thy native beauty,
Shall join to make thy form the public care.

SYLVIA.

I cannot quit this Iſland; cannot leave
Theſe woods, theſe lawns, theſe hills and deepning vales,
Theſe ſtreams oft-viſited, each well known haunt,
Where hand in hand with innocence I've ſtray'd,
And taſted joys ſerene as is the air,
That pants upon yon trembling leaves.

FERDINAND.

Such joys
For thee ſhall bloſſom in thy native land,
And new delights ariſe. There cultur'd fields
Wave with the golden harveſt; commerce pours
Each delicacy forth; there ſtately domes
Attract the wond'ring eye; there cities ſwarm
With buſy throngs intenſe, and ſmiles around

A ſcene of active, cheerful, ſocial life.
Thither I'll lead thee, ſweet.

SYLVIA.

And yet my heart
Miſgives me much: does not contention there,
And civil diſcord render life a ſcene
Of care, and toil, and ſtruggle? Does not war
From foreign nations oft invade the land,
With all his train of miſery and death?

FERDINAND.

Thy lovely fears are groundleſs. Ours the land,
Where inward peace diffuſes ſmiles around,
And ſcatters wide her bleſſings: there a king,
(My friend comes later thence, and tells me all)
There reigns a happy, venerable king,
Diſpenſing juſtice and maintaining laws,
That bind alike his people and himſelf.
From that ſcource liberty, and ev'ry claim
A free-born people boaſt, flow equal on,
And harmonize the ſtate; while in the eve
And calm decline of life our monarch ſees
A royal grandſon ſtill to higher luſtre
Each day expanding; emulous to trace
His grandſire's ſteps, to copy out his actions;
And bid the ray of freedom onward ſtretch
To ages yet unborn.

SYLVIA.

And do the people
Know their own happineſs?

FERDINAND.

They do, my ſweet:

Pleas'd

Pleas'd they behold their native rights ſecur'd;
Their commerce guarded, and the uſeful arts,
That raiſe, that ſoften, and embelliſh life,
All to perfection riſing. With a ſenſe
Of their own bleſſing touch'd, with one conſent
They pour their treaſures, and exhauſt their blood
In their king's righteous cauſe. Fair Albion thus
Raiſes her envied head; thus ev'ry threat
Of foreign force, each menace of invaſion
From a vain, vanquiſh'd, diſappointed foe,
Like broken billows on her craggy cliffs,
Shall murmur at her feet in vain.

SYLVIA.

Methinks
I long to ſee this place.

FERDINAND.

My Sylvia, yes,
Thou ſhalt return: propitious gales invite.
Come, my Conſtantia——oh! what mix'd emotions
Heave in this boſom at the ſight of thee?

CONSTANTIA.

My heart runs o'er with exſtacy of joy,
And tears muſt ſpeak my happineſs. I long
To utter all my fond, fond thoughts; to tell
The ſtory of my woes, and hear of thine;
While at each word our hearts ſhall melt within us,
And thrill with grief, with tenderneſs, and love.

FERDINAND.

The tale ſhall ſerve us in our future hours
Of tender intercourſe, to ſweeten pain,
To calm adverſity, and teach our ſouls

To

To bend in love, in gratitude, and praiſe
To the All-good on high, who thus befriends
The cauſe of innocence; who thus rewards
Our ſuffering conſtancy; whoſe hand, tho' ſlow,
Thus leads to rapture thro' a train of woe.

End of the THIRD VOLUME.